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A musical ethnography of the Kaapse Klopse carnival in Cape Town, South Africa

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A musical ethnography of the Kaapse Klopse carnival in Cape Town, South Africa

Jonathan Alexander Gregory

A dissertation submitted to the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and
Politics of the Queen's University of Belfast in fulfilment of the requirement for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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COLOPHON

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A musical ethnography of the Kaapse Klopse carnival in Cape Town, South Africa
Jonathan Alexander Gregory
PhD dissertation, March 2018
Supervisors: Fiona Magowan and Ioannis Tsioulakis
Queen's University Belfast

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*To my nephews and nieces,
Alice, Joaquim, Lucas,
Maria Cecília, Maria Fernanda, and Pedro.*

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Abstract

This research explores the interplay between culture and politics from a musical ethnography of the *Kaapse Klopse* carnival in Cape Town, South Africa. This cultural expression can be traced to colonial slavery when Cape slaves were given a day off on 2 January. Since the early 20th century, carnival troupes have gathered in football stadiums as a medium of socialisation to perform and compete against each other for trophies, profit, status, and bragging rights. The research is divided into four parts. In the first part, I discuss the impact of violence in township areas, the locus of carnival and where the majority of participants live, where I examine the role of carnival in the mitigation of physical and emotional distress, and the legacy of klopse music as symptoms of deeper divisions rather than historical imperatives. In part two, I discuss the functions and characteristics of klopse competitions, seeking to understand the reward scheme, motives and strategies for enticing players, as well as the effects of winning and losing, team work and pride on the individual and group. Part three focuses on the more negative aspects of competition, drawing on notions of persuasion, control and manipulation, as well as empirical discussion of how individuals compete for positions of power and status, and on how their quest for success in carnival reflects their position in the formal economy. Finally, in the last part, I examine the music of the *Kaapse Klopse* and explore its place within a rapidly changing South Africa, in which carnival and the political mainstream are moving in opposite directions, focusing on notions of ethnicity, entrainment, and solidarity, and the effects of power and money on the social field. Specifically, I use Durkheim's concept of collective consciousness to explain how the conscience collective is imperative to establishing moral order and the continuity of parades and competitions.

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Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
BBT	Big Beat Team
BEE	Black Employment Equity
CBD	Central Business District
CCCC	Cape Cultural Events and Carnival Committee
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CTC	Cape Town Carnival
CTCC	Cape Town City Council
CTMCA	Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association
D6	Cape Argus District Six Entertainers
DA	Democratic Alliance
GAA	Group Areas Act
KKKA	Kaapse Klopse Karnival Association
SACB	South African Cricket Board
SACM	South African College of Music
SAPS	South African Police Service
SKW	Schotschekloof Walmers Rugby Club
UCT	University of Cape Town
YSBB	Young Sunrise Brass Band

Consultants

Munsif	Male aged 20–30, brass player and band coach. [9, 52, 104]
Zachary	Male, former director of the District Six Museum. [48]
Farid	Male aged 60–70, troupe captain and former gangster. [140, 141]
Akil	Male, troupe owner. [49]
Ron	Male, Carnival Board president. [108, 140]
Tyler	Male aged 40–50, music director of the CTC. [54]
David	Male aged 60–70, former troupe member and District Six resident. [160]
Sizwe	Male, member of the CTC organising committee. [54, 55]
Waddah	Male, troupe member and dancer. [163]
Ilias	Male aged 20–30, member of the singing pack. [82, 88, 90, 111]
Naim	Male, troupe director. [147–149]
Adeela	Female aged 40–50, journalist. [83, 85, 88, 89, 98, 113, 149, 166]
Kamil	Male aged 40–50, history teacher. [114, 147, 149]
Nicole	Female aged 30–40, member of the CTC. [152, 158]
Marco	Male, drummer and music director. [54, 61, 66, 90, 97, 120, 121, 142, 165, 166]
Rashad	Male aged 40–50, member of the <i>hout</i> band. [63, 82, 90]
Issam	Male aged 20–30, brass player. [57, 75, 82, 84, 91, 96, 107–109, 130, 169]
Joel	Male aged 50–60, band master. [15, 66, 71, 83, 87, 100, 101, 133]
Jacob	Male, Bo-Kaap resident and civilian peacekeeper. [5, 48, 66, 116, 123, 157, 160, 165, 166]
Nassar	Male aged 40–50, troupe owner. [102, 105, 107, 108]
Linah	Female, member of the CTC organising committee. [55, 56, 66, 67]
Taqiy	Male, singing coach and comic composer. [16, 83, 84, 92, 97, 98, 125, 126, 134, 160]
Saif	Male aged 20–30, member of the singing pack. [15, 56–58, 85, 96, 102–104, 112, 113, 133, 140]

1 Introduction

One seemingly trivial job carried out by those of us holding a wine barrel over our tummies was to push those in front forward, producing a slow undulating rippling motion across the entire troupe. It felt awkwardly impolite to be pushing others with my drum, and as much as I tried to avoid, I accepted it as normal. It gave us an additional role in the band, and many of us were also pushed forward by the drummers behind when our pacing slowed down. Especially when marching through narrow roads, with members waving umbrellas up and down, subtle pushing and cramming motions, it is sometimes literally impossible not to be taken by the mass.

What can an ethnography of musical performance tell us about society? In this research project, I explore knowledge from an observational and experiential perspective, and as a product of social interaction with feeling individuals. As field-based research, I have tried to gain a closer insight into the subjects' viewpoints and concerns, and understand how cultural performances both inform and are informed by broader patterns of social and economic formation. The object of study is the *Kaapse Klopse* carnival in Cape Town, South Africa, composed of 70+ privately owned troupes, each containing between 200 and 1500 members, and accompanied by supporters predominantly drawn from township areas 'far from the tourists and wealthier residents clustered in and around the city's core' (Samara 2011, p. 3). As a celebration of freedom of former slaves and their descendants, troupes gather every year to parade on the streets accompanied by music and dance, and compete against each other on football stadiums for trophies, money, prestige, bragging rights, and other rewards. The majority of troupes compete in either one of three leagues organised under Carnival Boards, which function as cartels to hedge the interests of the network and are responsible for running the New Year festivities and associated events around it, including competitions and the main procession, *Tweede Nuwe Jaar*,¹ on 2 January, as intermediaries between the state/funders and the community.²

¹ Most foreign words and other lesser known terms used in this dissertation are defined in the Glossary, beginning on page 193. On terminology, see Section 1.2.1, beginning on page 21.

² In addition to receiving government funding, each Board also collects money from gate fees

The main participants of the study are members of the working-class, mixed-race community, predominantly religious and conservative, and identified by its racialised appellation, coloureds, as a legacy of apartheid (literally ‘apartness’) but also as part of their self-identification.³ Most members are bilinguals and speak either English or Afrikaans as their first language, or a combination of the two as a form of code-switching. This ethnic group of mixed descent is a subset of the larger coloured population classified under the apartheid government (1948–1990), which sought to hinder resistance against the hegemony of the white elite. During the early stages of the regime, in the 1950s, unemployment rates were moderate, work and entertainment were often close to residence, and living costs were cheap. During the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s, the non-white majority was then forcibly removed from the so-called ‘white areas’, including the nexus of the creole culture in Cape Town, District Six, and relocated to an expansive low-lying area known as the Cape Flats (Figure 1.1b) and other racially designated areas in the Metropolitan municipality, furthest away from clinics, hospitals, social and economic opportunities in the Central Business District (CBD). Prior to the tragic relocation of Blacks, residents of District Six, in particular those involved in *klopse*, were bound largely by local resources, mutual support from neighbours and families, and a vibrant cosmopolitan street culture.

In 1976, the report of the Theron Commission, appointed in 1973 to investigate ‘matters relating to the coloured population group’, found that almost one third of coloureds lived below subsistence income levels and considered that 30 per cent of the potential coloured workforce were actually ‘unemployable’ (Goldin 1987, p. 149). A vast majority of coloureds therefore tried to compensate for their dire living conditions by developing social networks and protecting their culture (Martin 1999, p. 131).

As part of social engineering, ‘[r]elocations were organised in such a way that a form of social apartheid was superimposed on apartheid *per se*’ (Martin 1999, p. 148), which sought to also create a submissive working-class to serve the needs of the white elite, and eventually eliminate blacks from the country by transforming traditional tribal lands into self-governing ‘homelands’. At the current

(tickets) and the sales of carnival material, like panama hats and umbrellas, distributing a share of their earnings to all participating troupes. Troupe owners are responsible for making and selling uniforms, hiring musicians and providing services, which sometimes ensure profits when earnings exceed their losses. The percentage of the stipend each troupe receives from the Board is proportional to its size and position in the hierarchy, most of which is used to cover transportation, band, coaches, solo artists, and fabrics for making uniforms.

³ According to the most recent census, coloureds represent approximately 8.9% of the South African population (Africa 2012, p. 17). In the Western Cape, the distribution of the population by ‘population group’ is 48.8% coloureds, 32.9% black Africans, 5.7% whites, 1.0% Indians, and 1.6% Other, indicating the highest percentage of coloureds and whites when compared to the other eight provinces in the country. In Cape Town, coloureds are the largest group (42.4%), followed by black Africans (38.6%), whites (15.7%), Asian (1.4%), and Other (1.9%) (Census 2012).

pace and direction of political reforms, however, even the born-free generation is likely to continue to face disadvantage in their ability to escape servitude and participate in the social and economic mainstream, simply because most people cannot afford the costs in the formerly white areas and are pushed further where opportunities and resources are scarce. The fact that troupes return to the city centre, nonetheless, reassures their right to the uses of city spaces as part of their own struggle to ensure life is enjoyable and worth living. In a sense, and certainly not without trials, these parades are also helping to reshape public spaces as ‘spaces of justice (...) such that it becomes a reality not for capital, and certainly not just for the wealthy or the suburban shopper, but for all’ (Mitchell 2003, p. 233), and where local knowledge can contribute to the development of the urban space. Effectively, carnival is an ideal, and ‘an ideal can only inspire action for social change if it arises from possibilities suggested by actual experience’ (Young 1990, p. 241 cited in Mitchell 2003, p. 233), which carnival most certainly does.



(a) Administrative map of South Africa

(b) Cape Town in the Cape Peninsula

Figure 1.1: Map of Cape Town, South Africa. Cape Town is the capital and most populous city of the Western Cape, one of the nine provinces of the Republic of South Africa. It is also the second-most populous metropolis in the country behind Johannesburg, with a current population close to 3.7 million. As with other Mediterranean climactic regions, Cape Town is characterised by dry and windy summers and moist winters, with an yearly average temperature of 17.6°C . Much of the early history of the Cape Peninsula draws from written records of Portuguese explorers in the late 1400s. Colonisation began in the late 1600s with Jan van Riebeeck and other members of the Dutch East India Company, seeking to establish Table Bay as a port for European trade ships travelling to the Dutch colonies in the Indonesian Archipelago. The first inhabitants of this region, and perhaps the first group *vis-à-vis* the brutality of colonisation, were the Khoisan people, known as Khoikhoi (or Khoi). North from Table Bay (Figure 1.1b) on the Atlantic Ocean is Robben Island, where former president Nelson Mandela lived for 18 of the 27 years in prison before his release in 1990. At the northern end of the Peninsula, marked with a red dot, is Table Mountain, a signature landmark of the city of Cape Town. The dark grey area above False Bay is the Cape Flats, a low-lying region where most participants live, colloquially known as apartheid’s ‘dumping ground’. At the southern tip of the Peninsula is Cape Point, to the east, and the Cape of Good Hope, to the west. Furthest on the south (Figure 1.1a) is Cape Agulhas, the southern most tip of the African continent, where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans intersect.

RESILIENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE

Having thrived under prolonged periods of active impoverishment and political oppression, carnival can be traced back as early as 1823 (Bickford-Smith 2003), 11 years before slavery was abolished at the Cape. Resilience remains one of the most compelling features of how these music communities are formed and maintained. In the past, for the most part, carnival was never dependent on institutions and required no permission to participate. Carnival was intimately tied to the inner-city and bound by '[k]inship and occupational ties, as well as cultural forms [that] helped forge community identities (...) serv[ing] to remind members of their shared heritage of oppression and bondage' (Bickford-Smith 2003, p. 187). Akin to other forms of disruptive movements, troupes were never governed by leaders, besides the troupe owner himself, who was also entitled to certain 'social responsibilities' (Martin 1999), and were spread out across communities, as largely informal and unregulated organisations, making it difficult for governments or anyone else to shut down its operations without substantial efforts and despite successive attempts from the city council. 'Over the years the Carnival has been dogged by problems, negative onslaughts and controversy and regular pronouncements that the carnival would not, or could not, survive' (Pacey 2014, p. 118), and as a result carnival was pronounced dead on several occasions (see Martin 2007).

Arguably, carnival participants were not a political threat to the ruling elite as much as they were 'naturally gregarious, excitable and noisy' (Lewis 1987, p. 210 cited in Martin 1999, p. 117), bringing fateful tensions between upper/middle-class righteous and working-class revellers.⁴ Some consultants even went as far as claiming carnival was in fact a *ploy* of the government to reinforce negative stereotypes, 'keep people drunk' and weaken resistance. Either way, carnival existed in such a way that no single authority was able to fully control it, precisely because it was built around informal community nodes and networks not attached to any intermediaries prior to the establishment of Carnival Boards and promoters appointed by the city council to manage the event (the latter ended in 2015 with an important agreement between community leaders and the city council). In a similar context, Armstrong (2010, p. 452) argues that the 'appropriation of black cultural capital by event managers [is a mere] variation on that society's everyday patterns of exploitation'. Public funding is perhaps another way of instilling dependence, making it easier for governments to dictate conditions and/or increase political support.

Evidence abounds of attempts by both the state and industry to manage people's music-making. There are many tools at the disposal of controlling or repressive forces. Governments can use carrot-and-stick approaches through funding, setting regulatory agencies to work to

⁴ 'In the 1940s, the carnivals ceased to be a link between coloured political leaders and the proletariat, and this contempt for the people's festival on the part of the coloured élite made it easier for white racists to try and manipulate them' (Martin 1999, p. 117).

monitor and master the airwaves, enacting restrictive legislation, enforcing statutes through the judicial system – and, in the United States [and South Africa], does this through three overlapping and competing levels of government (local, state, and federal) (Slobin 1993, p. 70).

In spite of political coercion during apartheid, carnival participants and the social fabric with which carnival had been built was used to extend their field of social action. By the time of the GAA, the social economy of carnival had already matured, and for several decades carnival was run without support from the city council.⁵ ‘Particularly for pious Muslim women, the New Year afforded many the opportunity to breach the confines of the *private* (the home) into the realm of the *public* (street)’, and ‘provided many women with the chance to earn a timely bit of independent capital’ (Baxter 1996, p. 193).⁶ As one resident of Bo-Kaap told me, in the past, troupe activities were largely self-regulated and organised around informal community networks. He went on to explain that ‘ordinary people worked on their costumes, routines and musical skills all by themselves for the entire year. Local tailors [and] seamstresses made the costume. People sourced the material, made the design and bought their own [equipment]’ (Jacob, personal communication, 23/4/2015).⁷ Formally aligned with the largest trade union federation in South Africa, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and by extension with the African National Congress (ANC), the biggest affiliate of COSATU

Interview 1.1: for many years used to be the garment workers union [which] involve[d] all of the seamstresses, cutters, all of the people who made garments in the Western Cape. This was the house, the home of the textile sector, (...) a whole cottage and backroom industry where people had the means to make the uniforms themselves, [and by supplying music skills continued to promote] local ownership of the Minstrel Carnival (Jacob, personal communication, 23/4/2015).

Still today, carnival troupes are shockingly mutable, even by local standards, and can split or merge into two or more troupes over time, making it difficult to trace origins and genealogies, not to mention the number of new troupes that pop

⁵ In 1968, in response to carnival as a profit-making business and the high costs of staging the event, a Cape Herald journalist wrote ‘who pays for the coon carnival? The answer is simple and obvious. The coons themselves pay for the cost of the carnival’ (Martin 2007, p. 12). By 1994, one of the carnival bosses went as far as saying ‘the Cape Town Carnival [(klopse) is] the only carnival in the world which got absolutely no support from the local authority’ (Martin 2007, p. 45).

⁶ Between 1921 and 1951, klopse was largely a homosocial activity, with the overwhelming majority of employed women working in the clothing industry. ‘In their available “time-off”, outside the factory but also outside the home, women carved for themselves a place in public leisure but were also allocated “appropriate” roles in popular culture by the men and the dominant discourses of the time’ (Jeppie 1990, p. 26). Unlike Brazilian carnivals, women have not had prominent participation in klopse. Today, however, this is no longer the case.

⁷ All names of consultants appear as pseudonyms, which I discuss in Section 1.4.6 on page 44. Additional information can be found on page xii. For a list of transcription symbols, see Table 1.1.



Figure 1.2: Seamstresses making troupe uniforms. Hanover Minstrels employed ca. 5 dressmakers to produce 750 uniforms during a 2-month period. Photo by the author, 21 November 2014.

up from time to time. In the past, this relationship could perhaps be represented as a sociogram, or similar network diagram, of independently linked nodes rather than several nodes linked to a central node as it currently is. Today, this structure is largely based on the hierarchy of troupes and their committee split into one of three leagues, with every troupe connected to a single Board that controls all other connecting nodes, making it easier to dictate conditions and monopolise certain aspects of the music culture. It is also easier to disrupt a centralised system than it is to disrupt a distributed one, especially considering that these cartels are increasingly requiring government aid. Funding to the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association (CTMCA) was in fact recently declined by the Cape Town City Council (CTCC) in compliance with the Prevention of Organised Crime (POCA), alleging unpaid debts and criminal convictions among members of the Board (February 2017)

In contrast to how organised competitions are structured presently, carnival provided less (if any) income-earning opportunities, whilst also making participants and networks more resourceful, lessening the incentives to cheat, manipulate results, and outdo rival troupes. Troupes were also supposedly smaller in size and required less people to manage them, reducing the need for specialised labour force. Since the 1970s, however, 'the need for financial investment has increased with, for instance, the commercialisation and growing competitiveness of the music industry' (Baxter 2001, p. 98), also increasing the potential for greed to subvert elements of the music culture by stifling innovations threatening troupe dominance. Fundamentally, carnival has shifted from a decentralised network structure into a pyramid network structure, in which a large part of the culture is now filtered through centralised nodes. The fact that carnival is no longer bound to a specific locality, and that troupes frequently parade far away from where participants live, has also made troupe members far more reliant on those in control of the means of transportation, in a sense making 'local musical pathways' (Finnegan 2007), or routes that people deliberately take for music gatherings, less shiftable.

Poverty, greed and control

As a result of grand-scale forced removals from the mid 1960s, coloureds saw a sudden decay of their standards of living and opportunities, with fragmented communities, and their field of social action became severely restricted, forcing them to commute long distances to work, leaving their children unsupervised for longer hours. Not surprisingly, gangsterism and other illicit activities became a viable alternative for production and livelihood in township areas. Meanwhile, while resettlements were creating 'conditions for the expansion and intensification of crime' (Martin 2013a, p. 309), those who participated in the economic workforce of the city would soon become migrant labourers (Jephta 2015). Along with the entire Black communities, carnival was destabilised. Not only were troupes banded and relegated to isolated areas with the aim of hindering its residents' prospects, they were also prohibited from parading in the city centre, and by 1968 were no longer allowed access to the Green Point Stadium where competitions were traditionally held.

Another piece of legislation to significantly hamper carnival was the Riotous Assemblies Act (No. 17, 1956), which prohibited gatherings in open-air public spaces. Later on, in 1976, following prior attempts to restrict carnival to off-street venues, 'an edict was adopted banning all marches in Cape Town's centre' (Martin 2013a, p. 272), 'prevent[ing] the symbolic assertion of Coloured ownership' in the more affluent areas of the city (Oliphant 2013, p. 26). For Scott (1990, p. 19), understanding domination and resistance requires that we uncover the 'nonhegemonic voices and practices of subject peoples'. 'Resistance', he writes, 'is not only about the struggle for material or political resources but also for the struggle of culture and ideology through which the powerless create their dignity and autonomy'. Hence carnival still kept on its feet.

Yet, with the rapid surge of drugs and gang culture towards the end of the 1970s, violence and gang rivalry became an inherent part of carnival activities, attended mostly by men, with occasional stabbings and shootings during performances and associated gatherings. 'Several testimonies', according to Baxter (2001, p. 98), 'evoke the image of a past event sponsored by benevolent community-spirited troupe captains; replaced around the 1970s by drug lords, gangsters and avaricious entrepreneurs'. In other words, carnival became a propitious site for profit, in which individuals were able to leverage political power and status across troupes, and possibly beyond. For example, in order to participate in competition, troupes were obliged to purchase certain equipment from carnival bosses, some of whom held parallel positions in gangs. But realising the potential of the festival 'to attract foreign tourists and generate profits for the local economy', municipal authorities have tried to reorganise the festival into the hands of event managers (Martin 2013a, p. 272), facing vehement opposition from local community leaders seeking their piece of the pie. Until the mid-1990s, carnival was largely organised by event managers appointed by the city council, with little knowledge of the intric-

acies of klopse culture, and in 1996 'a Carnival Association was formed allowing captains to work in conjunction with representatives of the City Council' (Martin 1999, pp. 17–18), and in 2015, Boards were granted control over the organisation of the event.

A first attempt at gathering troupes under a 'captain's board' independent from the promoters who traditionally organised competitions at stadiums was made in 1994 when the Cape Town's Original Coon Carnival Board was launched. It established a new relationship with the successive Cape Town city councils and eventually gave birth in 2006 to a unified Cape Town Minstrels Carnival Association, on the board of which sat two nominated city councillors. Betting on the capacity of the Carnival to attract foreign tourists and generate profits for the local economy, the city council and the provincial government decided to contribute to the Carnival's budget and included the 'Cape Town Karnaval' among its officially sponsored 'Great Events' under the heading 'Arts and Culture'. Subsidies from the city council and the Western Cape provincial government, new possibilities of corporate sponsorship, and the growth in troupe membership exacerbated rivalries caused by differences in tolerance towards the participation of gangsters and drug dealers in the leadership and membership of troupes. The multiplication of dissensions provoked a split in the unified organisation (Martin 2013*a*, p. 272).

As a result of increased sponsorship and funding support, corporate logos are often stamped on the troupes' umbrellas and name brands often appear as prefixes in the names of sponsored troupes (e.g. Nokia All Stars). With existing and perhaps unchallenged commodification of carnival, bands have become service providers and exchanged for their use value. Musicians are now largely tied by economic interactions and the obligations to a larger community have been significantly reduced, creating inevitable tensions between social and financial exchange, and threatening the ethos of communal cooperation. Yet, although gangsters and opportunists are still around, troupes and brass bands function to mitigate urban violence as both an outlet for self-preservation, and a form of collective efficacy through which music networks help regulate antisocial behaviour in the communities. Concisely, they are designed to maximise community involvement, which in turn increases community supervision, shifting deviant energy towards music and away from delinquency, while also contributing to provide work opportunities, social and self-development, and cheap recreation. 'Accounts [also] suggest that greed overtook the pleasure of entertainment as the primary motive for troupe involvement' (Baxter 2001, p. 92), drawing membership from fundamentally biased individuals seeking to maximise profit, which is perhaps true of those in or seeking positions of power.

For sure, most participants are in it for the uplifting feelings they get from

entraining with other individuals and being deeply connected to those with whom they share affinities and a heritage of struggle that binds them closer. In addition to the escalation of gang involvement, an important aspect of this shift in the 1970s were the ways in which carnival was deployed, developing into a contest for control and profit, and as a place to enact power and success denied in the larger society. As a symbolic phallus, the size of the troupe and number of trophies, and the ability to command or forbid music, became measures of status. This play of power and economic dominance, however, has made some members and former members resentful of the current state of affairs, frequently polarising their idyllic recollections of the old community carnival, through which music, dance, and memory create historical awareness of their struggles and empathy amongst members of the group linked by their 'psychological need for a common past' (Baxter 1996, pp. 186–187).

Participants frequently criticise greed, corruption, and regulatory authorities, including the Municipal government, and carnival leaders for having challenged former distributions of power, enhanced by their accumulation of resources from funding support. In particular, they criticise the ways in which the (fun)damentals of the game have attracted an unhealthy focus on success, creating frustration among players who are unable to meet the demands, and making music communities more reliant on capitalist arrangements only to keep their heads above water. This means that wealthier clubs eventually become owners of the production, treating players as mere commodities, losing or gaining value as their performance outcomes fluctuate. Some members are even willing to downgrade their positions in a troupe of higher status only to regain lost feelings of respect and recognition. During my very first interview, I asked Munsif what he thought the main problem of carnival was, and after a brief sigh he answered 'greed for money'. Not surprisingly, the obsession of the modern world, money, was cited 151 times and was the fifth most frequently cited term in the 30 interviews I conducted between 2014 and 2015. For the unskilled and uneducated, formal work is not usually an occasion of pride, which is why glamorising music achievements has become so crucially vital over the years, and far more effective than glamorising industrial work, as a channel to vent negative emotions and reinstate self-esteem. Yet, as money and power move to the forefront, the problem arises if and when these channels are subverted, and whether the community will be able to hold on by other means.

The danger of obsolescence. What is important to realise is that post-apartheid South Africa is undergoing rapid political transformations, so much that 'Cape Town has gone through more political, institutional and economic changes in the past ten years than many cities have been through in a century' (McDonald 2012, xviii–xix). It is difficult to estimate the extent to which these drastic changes are having and will have on klopse, and other national minority groups, but fundamentally much of their present struggles are linked to the gulf between a modernising nation-state

and traditional communities, whose ‘modern relevance’, as one consultant has said, are being put on trial. Also, while the gap between racial cohorts has moved closer to the national average, inequality within-group has actually increased as more people experience upward social mobility (see Seekings 2007), which means that while most participants are still bound by ethnicity, class differences within-groups are becoming more prominent, and as a result, the economic gaps between troupes are also increasing.

This shift is important because the gap between aspiration and actual resource to fulfil those desires is widening for those rowing against the current of power and money and unable to keep up with the growing demands of the game. This means that traditional performers are being replaced by specialised and more qualified performers in and outside the community, and the interdependence that once held them together is steadily eroding, gradually making amateur members obsolescent and unmotivated to compete when the game is unfair, which can eventually lead to frustrated expectations, and even violence when similar outlets are not available. With an increase of income, troupe owners are increasing their buying power and bidding on specialised and more qualified musicians, which means there is now greater competition among former suppliers of skill, and that underrated suppliers are being shoved aside, rearranging social networks into largely financial networks.

1.1 THE FESTIVAL

The *Kaapse Klopse* is a festival traditionally performed and attended by the coloured people of Cape Town during the summer holiday in the southern hemisphere, usually commencing on 16 December with a mock parade known as *Voorsmakie*, along with two associated music traditions: Malay Choir and Christmas Band, each hosting their own music competitions, and requiring members to meet regularly for music practices and other related activities. The festival is essentially the coming together of people after months of hard work and preparation to celebrate life and freedom, during which families, friends and neighbours of all ages gather to ‘wash down’ their problems and celebrate the second New Year, *Tweede Nuwe Jaar*, the only day of the year when former slaves at the Cape were exempt from work. ‘It is an expression born from the Cape slave experience of 2 January as a sole day of rest in a year filled with enforced labour’ (Martin 2000, p. 63 cited in Davids 2007, p. 119).

Unlike most carnivals, klopse does not follow the Christian calendar or ‘the seasons of the northern hemisphere’ (Mason 2010b, p. 19). Instead, its activities begin around August, after the rugby season, but for Muslim participants never coinciding with Ramadan, one of the Five Pillars of Islam in which Muslim devotees spend much of their days secluded from secular life as a physical endeavour of self-sacrifice and spiritual purification. While carnival poses a moral dilemma to Muslim participants, and is likewise subject to criticism from their more conservative counterparts, the moral lines that separate it from Islam are not clearly

defined and often avoided by participants themselves. Nevertheless, carnival and Islam (and perhaps rugby as well) serve as points of convergence between the much dispersed coloured community, entrenching social cohesion and a strong sense of communal solidarity. It is through these ritual bondings that make up a very defined social calendar that the community has been able to invest skills and opportunities and become resourceful outside the labour market and national political agenda, functioning as a source of resilience in response to global political, social, and economic realignment, and an occasion to entrain with fellow members and express the uttermost joy.

Every year participants gather at the foot of Signal Hill where freed Muslim slaves and their descendants settled in the wake of the Emancipation Proclamation to indulge themselves with music, dance, and some carousing. The tradition draws from blackface American minstrelsy, when '[i]n 1848 the first group of American Minstrels visited the Cape'. 'After their tour', according to Pacey (2014, p. 117) 'three of the members remained in the Cape and teamed up with a family of singers, the Dantu brothers, who also ran the Cape of Good Hope Sports Club', establishing the first Cape Minstrel troupe named Original Jubilee Singers, premiering 'the first minstrel-type street parade on 1 January 1888', with several troupes established thereafter.

As a legacy of American minstrelsy, face painting is another important element of the festival, traditionally used as camouflage to disguise from their 'superior' and the people they mocked, as raucous jesters delivering their jokes and laughing loudly at them. Nowadays, mockeries and laughter are perhaps even more pronounced on the back of crowded buses packed with minstrels joking among themselves. Today, face painting still ensures some level of anonymity, but is mostly used as decoration and artistic expression. Participants cover their faces or heads with a white paint, drawing art shapes over it, like music symbols, words like 'Champions' or whatever else is appropriate using the colours of the troupe and coating them with glitter or other facial ornaments. Clearly, the mask encourages a sudden change of personality, functioning to 'to turn their mental state from individual, or "everyday" state into the collective, or "critical" state of mind (...), turning them from separate individuals into the members of a common single super-personality' (Jordania 2011, p. 174). Klopse carnival therefore entails mind and body transformations towards a certain aroused personality. Like the *atjas* (see Glossary), masks are also an imminent threat, which 'is why actual rebels mimic carnival – they dress as women or mask themselves when breaking machinery or making political demands; their threats use the figures and symbolism of carnival' (Scott 1990, p. 181). In general, as a medium of emancipation, the carnivalesque is a seed for civil disobedience and large scale occupation of public space, as was the case of the Arab Spring, Occupy movements, Gezi Park protests in Istanbul, among others (see e.g. Tancons 2011).

Perhaps the main place of klopse gatherings is Bo-Kaap, with a still large concentration of Cape Muslims and a large number of Mosques, formerly know

as the Malay quarter, where I had the opportunity to live and spend quality time with members in the community during most of my time in the field. Bo-Kaap is also the headquarters of several troupes in Cape Town, including Good Hope Entertainers, Happy Boys, V&A Entertainers, and District Six Entertainers. A few months prior to the carnival season, ribbons (*lappies*) are hung across Wale Street representing the colours of the uniforms chosen by resident troupes, which no other troupe is allowed to use. The same happens in other areas, like District Six, where troupe members gather and practice. These meeting places are known as the troupe's headquarters, or *klopskamer*, distributed across various neighbourhoods in Cape Town, especially in the Cape Flats. This tradition has been kept alive since the 19th century as a commemoration of freedom that speaks to the traumas, migration and creolised experiences of the people of mixed descent in Cape Town, as a temporary release from subservience and increasing exploitation of wage labour.

1.1.1 *Klopse procession and short chronology*

Tweede Nuwe Jaar is a rite of renewal and traditional road march held annually at the city centre on 2 January (see Figure 1.4). In 2015, however, the festival was postponed to 17 January, two weeks later. As early as 8:00 am this day, under a clear sky, troupe members started gathering under the trees in the corner of Pentz and Wale Street before the first procession in Bo-Kaap as a tribute to the local community. Members will sometimes take this time to paint their faces, sort uniforms and any other last minute arrangement. At least among a small parcel of the troupe, and in a discrete and undisclosed manner, mood altering substances are used throughout, especially psychoactive drugs like alcohol, ecstasy, and methamphetamine, as well as soft and energy drinks, keeping their energies high and spirits euphoric. Members arrive gradually, most of whom come from the Cape Flats. At 12:00 pm lunch is served at the patio of the *klopskamer* in Pentz Street, where music rehearsals and other gatherings are held. By 12:40 pm the band is warming up, captains are whistling or shouting orders and troupe owners are making announcements with electric megaphones as troupe members begin lining up. With dancers scattered mostly on the sides or behind the brass band and drum majors leading the entourage, roughly, the order during processions, from back to front, is as follows: brass → marching percussion → *houte* percussion → jingles.

At 1:00 pm the troupe starts making its way down the narrow cobblestone roads of Bo-Kaap to the sounds of brass and percussion instruments, receiving the uttermost attention from photographers and spectators. The first and perhaps most difficult turn is in Dorp Street. As bodies move and shuffle down the streets, a few people attempt to follow the troupe as they squeeze on the narrow margins, but most spectators are gathering in Wale Street to watch the procession from below. In the cramped space of our journey, there is only room for small steady steps, accompanying the pulse of the *ghoema* (pronounced gu-ma) with our feet close to

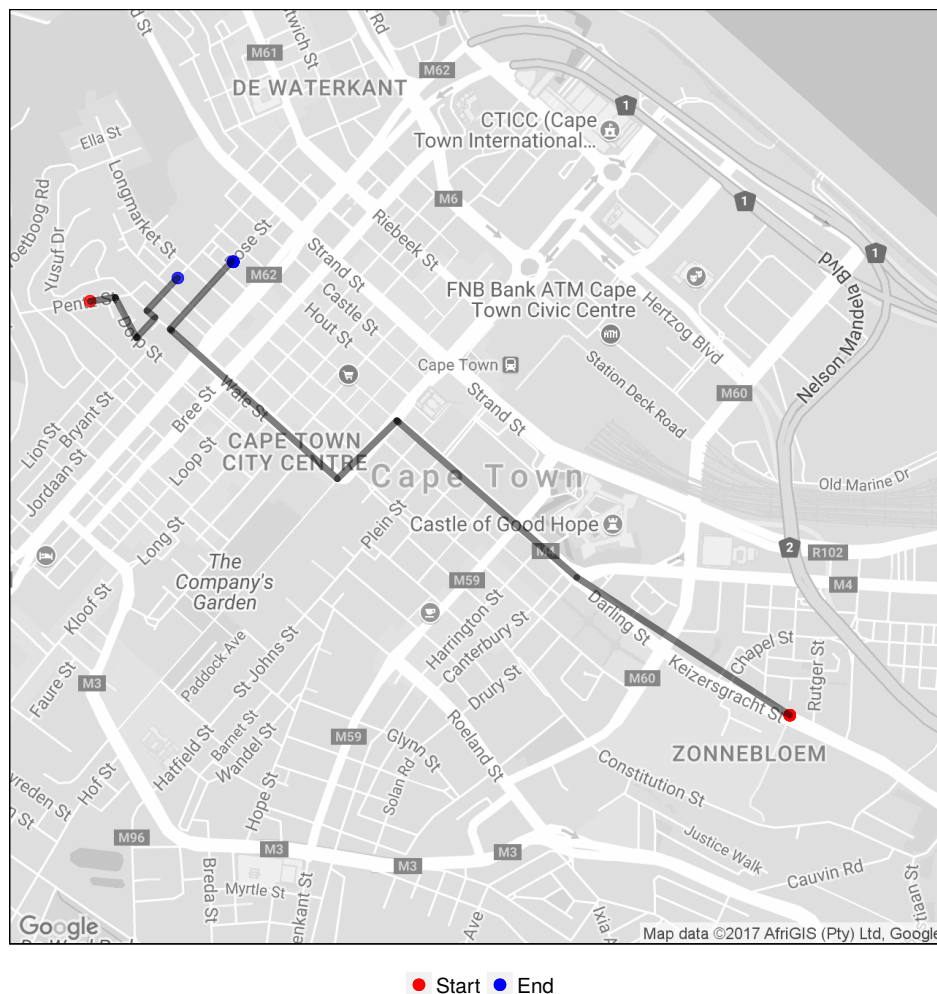


Figure 1.3: Troupe approaching the City Hall, led by junior drum major (*voorloper*). Photo by Claudia Cardoso, 17 February 2017.

the ground, resembling the way in which former slaves walked with ‘shackles on the[ir] feet’, an ‘embodied practice directly [linked] to the Cape’s history of slavery’ (Inglese 2016, pp. 2, 98). The troupe then turns left in Van Der Meulen Street, veering into Wale Street and onto Chiappini Street where hired buses are waiting. From there we head to the famous Keizersgracht Street in District Six, as a symbolic homecoming, for the main road march.

The traditional route of *Tweede Nuwe Jaar* begins in the District Six area moving upwards towards Bo-Kaap. The entire route is approximately 2.4 km and took us around 5 hours to complete with short intermittent breaks every hour or so. Around 2:40 pm, as the buses arrive from the first road march in Bo-Kaap, members begin gathering in Keizersgracht Street, Zonnebloem, waiting for their turn to parade, with a gorgeous view of Table Mountain on our left. There is not much else in the area, which I presume resembles the wholesale demolition of District Six when local houses were bulldozed and over 60 000 residents forcibly removed. Ironically, the name Zonnebloem translates to ‘sunflower’, ‘a cynical twist for a landscape now imposed upon the cold concrete modernist structures of the Cape Technikon and empty lots of dried grass and scattered trash’ (Inglese 2016, p. 4). The first photo of the troupe *jolling* captured with my camera was taken at 2:59 pm, still in Keizersgracht Street. Lively spectators are gathering on the sidewalks, and many have spent their nights camped under gazebos to secure their place next to barricade fences closest to the street. The procession continues onto Darling Street, passing by the Castle of Good Hope on the right and reaching the City Hall on the left at 5:46 pm. On our way, we also pass several other historical landmarks, including the oldest Dutch Reformed church in South Africa – Groote Kerk (established in 1841), Slave Lodge Museum, St George’s Cathedral (est. 1901), and the Bo-Kaap Museum.

At the end of Darling Street, the troupe then turns left into Adderley Street and right into Wale Street, at 6:37 pm, and up the slope of Wale Street into Rose Street on the right. The last photo was taken still in Wale Street, close to Buitengracht Street, at 7:18 pm, but the procession continued for another hour or so. At this point, our bodies were experiencing fatigue and quickly reaching a point of exhaustion. Face

Figure 1.4: *Tweede Nuwe Jaar* procession

paintings were cracked or smudged with sweat, and lips of brass players were burst as symbols of bravery. Parading is energetically costly, and untrained bodies can burn out quickly. With sore legs and lower backs, older and unfit dancers were perhaps suffering the most, while some kids had already collapsed on their parents' lap. My arm muscles were completely burned out from playing the *gummy* for so long, with sweat still dripping below the satin, and my eyes utterly red from all the glitter that had fallen into them, so much that I could see shiny sparks of glitter every time I moved my eyeballs sideways.

Like in sports, participants define themselves from their allegiance and devotion to their troupe. Post-removal parades, in particular, have been able to forge feelings of bonding and belonging irrespective of their places of residence. Baxter (1996), for instance, makes a compelling comparison of parades before and after the Group Areas Act (GAA). She argues that before the Act, parades were conceived as a 'circular route' in which participants enclosed the community borders, symbolically

protecting (or perhaps embracing) its residents (see Figure 3.1 in Baxter 1996, p. 90). To expand on the circle metaphor from an evolutionary perspective, ‘the aim of the dance was to achieve the physical safety of the group, it is very likely that males would create a circle, trying to keep children and women inside the circle’ (Jordania 2011, pp. 128–129). Circle dances were also common at the Cape during picnics and as part of New Year’s festivities, like the *kransdance*, with a *gummy* player in the middle ‘playing the music and women dancing around him and forming a ring’ (Martin 1999, p. 74). After the Act (1966/1967), however, the circular route became uni-directional (see Figure 1.4), ‘with participants moved to far-flung and disparate areas, banned from marching along the precise route of before, and with traffic legislation outlawing their procession from the main central area anyway, the route of the procession was fundamentally altered’ (Baxter 1996, pp. 89–90).

1.1.2 *Klopse competition*

Since 1907 when the first klopse competition was held at the Green Point Track, troupe members gather to perform their show pieces, competing for different prizes and in different categories, and subjecting themselves to ‘a highly wrought emotional experience’ (Thompson 1990, p. 93 cited in Bruinders 2012, p. 144). On the road, battle of the bands occur when two bands cross each other, and ‘when the instruments face you, that’s the sign for battle’, during which players attempt to outplay their rivals to prove ‘who’s the best, [and] who’s the strongest’ (Joel, personal communication, 23/4/2015). The purpose of the battle is to make rival players lose sync among themselves. At one point, the knockout occurs when players are unable to carry on with the beat and the band begins falling apart, eventually coming to a halt. As Saif told me, ‘the only way you are able to tell who wins the battle of the band would be the band who stops playing first, (...) somewhere along the line one of them are gonna go out [of sync] and they are not gonna hear their own band, and that basically gets the winner’ (personal communication, 3/5/2015).

An article published by the Cape Times in 1959 suggests that competitions began as a gamble to aid cricket, when a live-wire Australian named Harry Coggins saw an opportunity to revert the Green Point Cricket Club’s financial crisis at the time. The story is told by a former silversmith who apparently sold the first trophies to Harry. Harry then ‘persuaded club officials to spend about £100 (...) on trophies for the Cape Coons’, which ‘[i]n those days performed only sporadically (...) [and suggested] that the club should take any profits from that venture’. The event was a success, the club ‘was put back on its feet and all the trophies were paid for’ (Martin 2007, p. 36).

Since then, football stadiums have always been the nexus for these performances providing a well-tested architecture for competitions, where troupes gather for 17 specific contests formally adjudicated by a panel of 6 to 8 adjudicators. Built in 1972 and renovated in 2009, the Athlone Stadium is now the current venue of the CTMCA Board, whose president is Mr Richard ‘Pot’ Stemmet, owner of Shoprite

Pennsylvanians. As troupe members enter the gate, they are searched for booze, weapons, and drugs, also to help prevent fights and retaliation from rival gangs. On the ground floor are informal food vendors selling corn, chip rolls, steak gatsby, soft drinks and other street foods, filling the space with smell and fumes of fried grease. Some children are playing and running around while others are peeling potatoes on the floor to help their parents. Most spectators gather on the bleaches of the West Stand facing the stage on the playing field with enclosed VIP areas above, also occupying parts of the North and South Stand, while the East Stand, facing the back of the stage, is empty. Performers are usually either watching rival troupes perform, socialising or warming up with their coaches at dressing rooms inside.

During competitions, each of the 17 items adjudicated receives a score from 0 to 100. The item's final score is the average of points given by each adjudicator. Classification points are only given to the five troupes with the highest scores, in which case the troupe with the highest score receives a total of 9 points, the second 7, the third 5, the fourth 3, and the fifth 1. No points are given from the sixth position onward. Troupes are then ranked according to the sum of classification points of the 17 items. The top five troupes are ranked accordingly, although only the first three receive financial bonus proportional to their rank. Under each league, the troupe with the highest point wins the competition, and is awarded trophies and a financial reward. Most importantly, perhaps, the troupe gains bragging rights until the following carnival (see also Figure 3.2).

Troupes are distinguished mainly by their names, tracksuits, and colour of their uniforms, and are organised under Carnival Boards, each containing three leagues reflecting the troupes' size and skill level. Troupes are also distinguished by their items of speciality (e.g. marching, exhibition, Group Song and so on). Spanning several weeks after the New Year, self-organised tournaments are a medium of socialisation among members of the coloured community, for which they rehearse several months prior to performances in order to improve skill and build confidence. They also engage in fund raising events and a wide range of activities to make themselves resourceful, enhancing social relations and mutual support, in which every person performs at least one role within the troupe's social organisation to help the team achieve its goals. For Taqiy, 'all this starts at the coons, that's where they showcase their talents, who's better than who, who can do what, and in the coons there are [many different] items, meaning different categories of music' (personal communication, 1/5/2015).

From an inside perspective, competitions serve several apparent reasons described in Chapter 3, one of which is it provides cheap entertainment, especially when alternatives are not easily accessible, and when consumers of the culture are also their producers. Another salient observation are feelings of euphoria and stress, or a combination of both (*eustress*), in which participants become excited when their team plays well or are otherwise stressed when they fail, as a cycle between joy and despair, success and failure. For performers, competitions create

a sense of accomplishment even when their team loses, and provide opportunities to prove themselves, and experience the fluttery feeling of performing to a large audience, turning welders and hawkers into full-fledged artists. Spectators in general also enjoy the inherent drama of competition, especially when the outcome is uncertain. They eventually acquire common knowledge allowing them to engage in match and post-match discussions, verbal and sometimes physical confrontations, providing opportunities to escape menial labour and boredom, relax, and let some of the steam off. Overall, victory confers prestige and popularity to winning troupes, and 'through their display of excellence, both in music, in elegance and in discipline, they aim at showing the worthiness of the participants, and of the community they come from' (Bruinders 2006–2007 cited in Martin 2013a, p. 108).

1.1.3 *Klopse music*

Rhythmically, *klopse* is characterised by a specific rhythmic pattern that 'emerged out of the Creole (colored) community, for whom inclusion into the nation state has historically been marked by ambivalence' (Bruinders 2012, p. 2, see also Section 5.1.1). Harmonically, *klopse* is largely influenced by American popular music, and in particular Cape jazz and *marabi* style and chord progression (I - IV - I - V), developed in the 1920s in mining and African working-class townships around Johannesburg (Coplan 1985; Martin 2013a). *Ghoema* and *marabi* both serve as a kind of wild card that can be used to accompany a wide range of popular melodies and communal activities. Their instruments are also portable and relatively cheap, 'bring[ing] people together in specific alignments, whether as musicians, dancers or listening audiences' (Stokes 1994, p. 12), functioning to overcome the distances between individuals.

Since the early stages of colonialism in the 1600s, much of the music history of Cape Town evolved from processes of creolisation, common in slave societies 'in which the colonisers' society and the colonised society were intimately entangled' (Martin 2013a, p. 86). These cross-cultural encounters increased with the establishment of Cape Town as a port city between West Europe and the East Indies, and later with the establishment of Dutch and British colonies in the eighteenth century. With the expansion of colonies and the slave trade, local musicking was influenced by European settlers, indigenous people, African slaves of different ethnicities and Muslim slaves brought from Southeast Asia. '[T]he *ghoema* beat may have [therefore] "imposed" itself as the basic pattern of Cape Town popular musics because it represented the smallest common denominator which appeared in overlapping areas where the diverse rhythmic sensibilities and practices of the people who coexisted at the Cape came together' (Martin 2013a, p. 353).

As the product of a melting pot, the *ghoema* developed from *piekniekliedjies* (picnic songs) and *ghoemaliedjes* (*ghoema* drum songs) sung by slaves at picnics and at the streets of the Cape Peninsula on public holidays. A common instrument during these music gatherings was the *ghoema* drum (or *gummy*), a 10 to 12" cylindrical strapped hand drum traditionally made from repurposed small wine casks made

from wood with herd skin nailed over one of the two open ends. According to research gathered at the Franschhoek museum (2015), '[g]hoemaliedjies or drum songs quintessentially represent the coming together of slaves from all over Africa and the East. The lyrics of these songs occasionally referred to historical events, people and places. More often they were satirical or lewd songs that commented on their masters or mistresses in subtle ways'. Today, the style is spread out across various genres and sub-genres in Cape Town, but is perhaps most pronounced during New Year festivities, which include the *Kaapse Klopse*, Malay Choirs, and Christmas Bands. Today, the bulk of klopse music are arrangements, or 'ghoemerised' versions, of American popular music as an interplay between tradition and modernity, local and foreign. For Martin (1999, p. 117),

importing songs and impersonating international stars were used as means of signifying Cape Town: it meant that the underprivileged victims of racism and apartheid were not imprisoned in their townships and cut off from the rest of the world, but very much attuned to it, in permanent contact with its most modern and creative fields. (...) The transformative appropriation of songs and singers displayed the capacity of Cape Town and of Capetonians to absorb and recreate whatever was available on the world stage, and to adjust to any kind of modernity just invented. It can therefore be interpreted as a form of symbolical denial of the stereotypes attached by the ruling classes to coloureds as people without culture, unable to create anything and wholly dependant upon the whites.

Adaptations of foreign culture were then used to fulfil local needs and their desire for modernity, threading cultural elements into new forms of creative expression. Ultimately, '[t]he initial absorption of the blackface minstrel into the Cape Carnival was a bid for freedom', creating a sense of kinship with American blackface groups who 'spoke to the experience and survival of slavery' (Davids 2013, pp. 97–98), in which American style brass bands during the 1950s and 1960s came to symbolise freedom as an antithesis to the situation in South Africa during the same period (Oliphant 2013). From a theory of creolisation, Martin (2013a) suggests that despite the violence between colonisers and colonised, these encounters were also creative and provided ways for restoring dignity and humanhood under conditions of slavery and oppression. Later on, during apartheid, music allowed individuals to thwart discriminatory conventions, ultimately 'invalidat[ing] the ideological principles on which racism and apartheid were founded' (Martin 2013a, p. 172), as a medium of emancipation, challenging prescribed identities, and granting them access to a certain capital denied by their oppressors. Today, klopse music remains inward reaching and bound by a specific locality and community, not surprising with neoliberal policies in place and big media and broadcasting companies still owned and controlled by a small white elite.

1.1.4 *The social structure of troupes*

While troupes appear uncontrolled and insurgent during processions and public performances, they are all bound to a certain orderly structure. As far as dress codes, uniforms are made by local seamstresses from colourful fabrics, usually satin, and sometimes traded from places like China and Hong Kong. Ordinary members wear what is known as the *soldaat* (soldier) uniform and hold the lowest position in the troupe's rank (Figure 3.1). Some *soldate* may also join the troupe's choir, usually composed of adult males, known as the singing pack. Members of the pack are the core of the team. They expect no compensation and compete in 5 of the 17 items adjudicated: (1) Afrikaans Combined Chorus, (2) English Combined Chorus, (3) Afrikaans Comic, (4) English Comic and (5) Group Song, all of which, but especially the last, are prestigious titles, drawing the most attention from the crowd, and inspiring young men to sing in the pack from a young age.

Above *soldate* are the captains, who wear a more elaborate type of uniform distinguishing them from ordinary members. Captains work for the team on a voluntary basis and are sometimes described as the 'care givers' of the team. They look after the troupe (especially the youngsters) during road marches and competitions, ensuring that members adhere to the code of conduct of the team, and that certain chores and logistics run smoothly. Captains are also in charge of organising fund raising events and other social activities. Above captains are the executive members (exco or directors), sometimes referred as the 'work horse' of the team. Holistically, they are in charge of running the troupe, especially financially, and attend regular meetings throughout the year discussing logistics, payments, and other relevant issues. On competition days, they wear credentials granting them access into gates and other restricted areas in the stadium, and are clearly distinguished by the uniform they wear.

In the troupe's hierarchy, exco members are only below the troupe owner (or co-owners), although as it is often the case they both wear the same uniform. The chairperson of the Carnival Board remains the central figure of authority, and is likely to benefit the most financially, but nonetheless operates under close scrutiny and influence of members of the chair, namely troupe owners and other elected members of the Board. A troupe owner, sometimes revered as the boss of the team, is the heart of the troupe.

He is not only a financier and an organiser, he is also a boss in the social meaning of the word. Being a captain, in particular if the troupe is well run and wins several trophies, entails prestige and implies social responsibilities. A captain has to care for his committees and at least for the core members of his troupe. If they are in need, he must help them; if in hospital or jail, visit them (Martin 1999, p. 42).

Carnival's social structure grants individuals the opportunity to expand agency and spaces for cultural expression, while experiencing the very same cultural

mobility upon which klopse music was founded. But as I have mentioned earlier, the experience of mobility and freedom to create is being challenged as economic power begins to leverage cultural monopoly and innovations are being stifled. Next I will discuss race and racism in South Africa and proceed with an outline of the chapters and methodology.

1.2 RACE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Race and race theory. Racial categorisation of humans was an offshoot of the rise of a world political economy, in particular the Atlantic slave trade and conquest of the Americas, although it began to take shape much earlier with the Crusades, Inquisition and Mediterranean slave trade as ‘important rehearsals for modern systems of racial differentiation’ (Winant 2000, p. 172). In South Africa, it was also a means of establishing racial ranking in order to maintain relative social positions and cope with ‘the economic and demographic change that threatened White hegemony’ (Bickford-Smith 2003, p. 186). Correspondingly, with the rapid rise of migration and urbanisation during the post-World War II period, and as a result of the civil rights movement in the United States and anti-apartheid mobilisation in South Africa, the interest in race as a sociological subject increased, making previous biologicistic racial theories obsolete in response to an increasing awareness of the sociopolitical construction of race. In this section, I will discuss race theories espoused by South African ethnomusicologists studying South African coloured communities and South African expressive cultures in general, as well as terminology and race theories in general.

Oriented by ethnicity-, class-, and nation-based theories, a large body of work on race and racism began to be developed during the postwar era. *Ethnicity*-based theory ‘saw race as a culturally grounded framework of collective identity. *Class*-based theories understood race in terms of group-based stratification and economic competition. *Nation*-based theories perceived race in the geopolitical terms largely given by the decolonization process so prominent in the postwar era’ (Winant 2000, p. 178). By the turn of the 20th century, however, racism was already overtly rejected, and ‘the racial theory that sought to explain such phenomena slowly became obsolete. Thus we left a century’s end with a range of unanticipated, or at least theoretically unresolved, racial dilemmas’ (Winant 2000, p. 178). For example, the attempt of class-based theories to promote racial equality through affirmative action is faced with ‘a growing inequality *within* racially defined minority groups weaken[ing] group cohesion both politically and culturally’ (Winant 2000, p. 179). South African race theorists in the post-apartheid era are faced with similar challenges, having to interrogate the presence of racial ranking ‘in an era officially committed to racial equality and multiculturalism’ (Winant 2000, p. 180), and in particular to place race in the context of unstable and politically contested global racial dynamics, while helping to eradicate the symptoms of race and racism left over from the apartheid era.

1.2.1 Terminology

There is widespread agreement among researchers that racial classifications carry no objective meaning beyond the social construct by which they exist, and indeed naming conventions in South Africa have varied to some degree. As a result of the Population Registration Act in 1950 (amended in 1966), which created a national registration based on people's racial characteristics (phenotype), terminology of South African subjects is not without its challenges. In order to reflect some of the more recent conventions in the human and social sciences, I have adopted the terms black, white and coloured throughout, 'understand[ing] them as signifiers for social identities that are in a constant state of flux, instability, and re-imagination' (Davids 2013, p. 87). Irrespective of the underlying racism from which these definitions exist, racial denominations are still widely used in South Africa, including official censuses (see Africa 2012), and it is therefore important to recognise their present value as markers of self-identification. To overlook their significance would be to negate 'newly invented associations with this classification, stripping a sense of self from the people who have claimed the description and absorbed it as part of a distinctive community' (Jephta 2015, pp. 168–169).

More specifically, I will capitalise the word Black when referring to all non-white ethnic groups in South Africa, including Indians, coloureds and Cape Malays, 'in recognition of their common oppression under apartheid' (McDonald 2012, xx). I will also use the term coloured, or coloured community more broadly, when referring to members of the *klopse* community, acknowledging both their common socio-cultural background and the way in which they often presented themselves during conversations. Not all coloureds in Cape Town are associated with the *Kaapse Klopse*. In fact, many 'continue to hold a great deal of class- and race-based prejudice against the Carnival' (Inglese 2016, p. 67). With regards to the use of 'scare quotes around the term coloured, while leaving other categories, such as black and white, without them', I agree with Inglese (2016, p. 56) in that 'this has the result of continuing to naturalize blackness and whiteness, while further marginalizing colouredness, an outcome I wish to avoid'.

In the context of South Africa, community is invariably conflated with race, and describes a group of individuals bound by a common culture within a certain geographical area, or as Baxter (1996, xii) puts, 'a collective sharing a neighbourhood or memory and identification with a particular place'. The term 'group' defines a narrower subset of community, or 'an affinity group, the small-scale network of human bonding' (Slobin 1992, p. 20). A plausible alternative for those not tied to anything other than their interest in *klopse* is perhaps what Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002, p. 4) define as 'community of practice', namely people who 'meet because they find value in their interactions'. Members of these communities are not self-contained. Instead, they share some degree of familiarity with the culture on the Cape Flats in spite of resettlements and social mobility. It is often the case that coloured townships are less foreign to coloureds than black

townships and vice versa, both of which are still largely bound by skin shade as incarnations of race politics and markers of social identities. Indeed, community and politics often coalesce, and ‘both apartheid and post-apartheid government’s objectified communities as sites of governmental intervention’ (Jensen 2004, p. 187). By means of social exchange, band leaders and carnival authorities have been able to leverage and sustain their political influence in the community as ‘township politicians’. Township politicians, or community workers as they are also called, can sometimes take advantage of their position as intermediaries between state and community as a result of post-1994 struggles to bring townships ‘back under state control’ (Jensen 2004, p. 187).

Carnival groups are generally referred as troupes, teams, clubs, or klopse, although I tend to use the word klopse as a singular word and synonym of ‘klopse carnival’, rather than the Afrikaans plural of troupe or club. The terms klops, coon, minstrel, sport and carnival are used interchangeably. The word coon, however, is slowly being replaced by the word minstrel as a result of its racist connotation in American English. In fact, in 1998 ‘Coon Carnival was renamed the CTMC [Cape Town Minstrel Carnival] by the Cape Tourism Board’ (Davids 2007, p. 112), even though participants define coon as a mask resembling a raccoon, or coon for short, with white face and black streak on both eyes (see Figure 3.3), and many are not aware of its racist connotation. That said, I agree with Martin (2007, pp. 1–2) in that ‘[t]he signification a word has in the United States cannot and should not be considered as the only signification a word can have in English’, which according to the author in a later publication, ‘illustrates an incapacity to understand that, in international languages such as English, the meaning of words change in the course of their travels, and that, for instance, when Cape Town revellers proudly claim to be Coons, they do not feel they are debasing themselves in any way’ (Martin 2013a, ix).

Colloquial definitions are a part of everyday local communication and I will make an effort to retain their original appellation in the text when appropriate, including terms which I would not otherwise use, like ‘singing pack’ (choir) or ‘when the band *strikes*’ (play). In order to emphasise their context, I will distinguish them with quotation marks, accompanied by translations when needed. Most foreign words and other lesser known terms are also defined in the Glossary, beginning on page 193.

1.2.2 *South African coloured communities*

Race in South Africa is a slippery subject. The concept has been predicated not only ‘on the very specific ways in which race was invented and implemented’ (Davids 2013, p. 90), but also on the ways in which identities were shaped by social, economic, and political forces. Racialised communities in South Africa, however, are also products of cultural affinities, alliances and experiences. It is therefore important to understand the ways in which racialisation has formed and re-formed a variety of communities over time, and in particular to problematise the idea of

‘coloured’ from an internal South African perspective, and acknowledge that race labels have had surprisingly different meanings across local communities.

In the case of the coloured community in the Free State during apartheid, for example, the musical culture used as a means of self-identification has not shared the same characteristics during the same period in the Western Cape, whose members were geographically isolated and perhaps privileged during the regime (Barz 2015). From a research point of view, the intersection of music and race in South Africa poses a similar challenge, and while racially identified musical genres have existed for a long time in racialised societies, they are not always equivalent and these societies are not always comparable. Coloured communities in other parts of South Africa, for instance, might hold ‘strong[er] affinity for and affiliation with Black expressive culture’ both locally and abroad (Barz 2015, p. 139), ‘rather than with the typical neighboring White community (“Western culture”)’ (Barz 2015, p. 140), in which case any assumption I draw on the coloured community translates to a small sample of coloured musicians in Cape Town with whom I had the opportunity to work with more closely during a specific time period.

Of my review of the literature on music and race in South Africa, the work of Jorritsma (2011, p. 6) stands out as a well thought introduction (see also Muller 2008). It begins with a discerning critique of ‘racialised views of coloured people as products of miscegenation’, which assume some form of essence of colouredness based on racial hybridity, silently erasing the history of slavery underpinning the formation of these communities (see Haupt 2012). As Jorritsma (2011, p. 7) suggests, this view is problematic in a number of ways, but in particular, it creates a deceptive ‘perception of coloured people’s music merely as a “mixture” of black and white musics, therefore mapping coloured people’s music onto their apartheid racial classification’, and making it difficult to dissociate coloured identity from mixed-race stereotypes. In bringing attention to vague narratives of purity and authenticity, this approach has contributed greatly to the construction of an in-between race that is neither white nor black, narrowing coloured identity to an exotic Other and falling short to acknowledge the significance and extent of inter-racial solidarities, as demonstrated by the Soweto uprising of 1976 among other historical events.

Barz (2015, p. 123) takes a similar stance when criticising ethnomusicological studies that frequently overlook ‘the blurring of the divisions between markers neither of race nor (...) the potential for different hues of the same colour’. One possible explanation to the problem of reinscribing colour divisions is perhaps ‘that the peculiarities of race are in many ways both formed and informed by the identity[-ies] of the scholar applying culturally specific race theories’, namely the subjective stance of the researcher (culture, race, nationality and so on) which often ends up spilling onto how these theories are conceived.

In her outline of South African scholarship on coloured people, Jorritsma (2011) goes on to describe the ‘instrumentalist’ approach as a split from the essentialist orientation, largely influenced by biological thinking on race, rejecting previous

assertions of coloureds belonging to a separate racial group, and challenging the construction of coloured identity ‘as an artificial concept imposed by the white supremacists state (...) [and] instrument of social control’ (Adhikari 2009, p. 11 cited in Jorritsma 2011, p. 7). For Moodley and Adam (2000, p. 55), ‘[i]t is the instrumental use of race in an open competition for positions and scarce resources – not primarily an emotional attachment to ethno-racial identity – that has given rise to the use of race whenever it appears to be an asset or a liability’. In the field of ethnomusicology, in particular, the work of Coplan (1985) was a leap forward in the right direction from previous ethnographies, helping to rethink black expressive culture against preconceived notions of indigeneity and authenticity, albeit ‘neither of these positions understood colourness as part of an African identity’ (Jorritsma 2011, p. 8). Another turning point and leap forward led by Adhikari (2009) was the concept of social constructionism, in which he argues that

coloured identity cannot be taken as given but is a product of human agency dependent on a complex interplay of historical, social, cultural, political and other contingencies... The creation of coloured identity is also taken to be an ongoing, dynamic process in which groups and individuals make and remake their perceived realities and thus also their personal and social identities (Adhikari 2009, p. 13 cited in Jorritsma 2011, p. 8).

In bringing human agency selectively to the forefront, this third approach has set the tone for much post-apartheid debate, ‘mak[ing] allowances for different reactions and strategies within various communities according to geographic location [and historical circumstances], among other factors’ (Jorritsma 2011, p. 8). Initially applied in the context of the Caribbean, the concept of creolisation, and entanglement by extension, provide an important theoretical insight for the analysis of race in the South African context, drawing on how cultural encounters, however violent, have shaped identity-making as dynamic and creative processes (Erasmus 2001). In laying much of the groundwork in post-apartheid studies, this concept helped broaden the theoretical scope from earlier emphasis on separation to the blending and creolisation of cultures, defined as

the coming into contact of several cultures, or at least several elements of distinct cultures, in one particular place of the world, which results in a new phenomenon, totally unpredictable in relationship with the sum or only the synthesis of these elements (Glissant 1997c, p. 37 cited in Martin 2013a, p. 129).

Arguably, this fourth theoretical orientation offers a more accurate framework for understanding communities from the creative agency of individuals and ways in which different identities, cultures and histories intersect to form unique variants, which stem from ‘a dialectics of internal and external dynamics that operate

even in conditions of oppression' (Martin 2013a, p. 380). This logic is perhaps counter intuitive to the very principles of the apartheid regime, which sought to maintain a ruling elite by fragmenting South Africans on the basis of colour, and indeed, '[m]any Coloured people had no desire to slip further in the hierarchy and sought to distance themselves from Africans' in the hope 'to maintain or improve relative social positions' and 'escape from the attacks being directed at non-European people in general' (Marks and Trapido 2014, pp. 162, 157, 161). What is interesting to note, however, is that

the creolization of colouredness in the special circumstances of South Africa meant a certain degree of complicity with imposed racial hierarchy of white as superior and black as inferior, in other words, the acceptance of black people as subordinate to both coloured and white people. Therefore, the South African coloured 'cornered community' had to contend with not only the historical contexts of slavery and cultural eradication but also complicity with certain apartheid political ideologies and policies (Jorritsma 2011, p. 12).

This shows how institutionalised racism further entrenched the ambiguity of coloured identity, and as much as the ruling elite intended and despite firm racist policies in place, never truly prevented cross-cultural pollination from taking place (see Martin 2013a), perhaps because musicians can cross racial boundaries more easily than non-musicians (Mattern 1997). It is thus difficult to make accurate assertions of social identities and racially identified musical genres. Kwaito artists and their music, for instance, have come to represent those involved in street culture and poverty-stricken ghettos, and later the emerging black middle class and elite, nurturing resentment among the original audience of this music. Yet, even if the country's poor resent the elite's interest in this type of music, many also envision the possibility of entering the 'privileged circle', if only to embrace what was once largely restricted during and as a result of apartheid: consumer culture, gold chains and other markers of prosperity. The paradox, nevertheless, is that '[t]oday kwaito artists are models for the youth who wear gold – the gold that their grandparents worked like slaves to dig out of the ground – around their necks' (Steingo 2005, p. 354).

Faced by rapid social and political transformations, post-apartheid race theorists are having to rethink race and reassess politically ambivalent labels that for too long overshadowed the diverse hues of South African communities. Haupt's (2012) analysis on the appropriation of race in the music industry demonstrates some potential for examining contemporary concerns on race and racism. In particular, he examines modern-day representations of race by already privileged artists in control of the means of representation, exploring modern-day blackface by hip-hop artists and their caricaturisation of coloured identity, specifically the Cape Flats gangster, for the benefit of their artistic projects and 'enjoyment of Ramfest's largely *white* audience' (Haupt 2012, p. 149). Conversely, '[w]ithout the means

to convert “cultural resources into symbolic capital”, black, coloured and white working-class subjects have limited means to control the ways in which the meanings of racial and class identities are interpreted’ (Haupt 2012, p. 132). Haupt’s approach provides an effective way of writing about the political nature of race in South Africa and analysing post-apartheid concerns on race and racism.

1.2.3 *The coloured people of Cape Town*

As with other racial designations, the term coloured originates from historical efforts in South Africa to organise individuals based on their inherited physical appearance, ‘regardless of their individual and collective histories’ (Muller 2008, p. 169). The term was used initially ‘for purposes of the Cape population census in 1904’ to distinguish people of mixed racial descent (Golding 1987, pp. 12-13 cited in Jorritsma 2011, p. 6), gaining wider adoption under the Population Registration Act of 1950. Most coloureds descend from white settlers, indigenous African groups, slaves and political exiles brought to South Africa from Asia and East Africa by Dutch and British colonisers in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries (Mason 2010a). For Mason (2010a, para. 18), the label was introduced in the early nineteenth century by the British colonial government ‘to deny people who were free, but not of solely European descent, the rights and privileges of whiteness’. Later on under emerging segregationist policies, race divisions became the means by which the white elite was able not only to hinder resistance and the advance of Black societies but also obfuscate their political presence, in what is generally referred to as ‘divide and rule’, in which dominance is gained by means of splitting larger concentrations of power into smaller fragments that individually are unable to compete with the hegemonic force.

Under severe social and political constraints, much of the energy expended by Blacks during apartheid was used ‘to gain control of their cultural practice, products and representation, and to use them to regain autonomy in their individual and national lives’ (Coplan 1985, p. 2). Culture and entertainment were a means to pursue liberation, both in terms of challenging self-contained identities, and extending their field of social action. It is difficult, however, especially in contemporary South Africa, to outline an accurate representation of what constitutes coloured identity and I will try to avoid making narrow assumptions. In my experience, however, a few assumptions of the coloured community in Cape Town are often true. First, distinguished from the so-called ‘proper’ Afrikaans, coloureds generally speak a distinctive dialect referred to as *Kombuisetaal* (kitchen language), ‘a code-switching, colloquial mix of township slang, English-language phrases with Afrikaans inflections, Afrikaans idioms and expressions, and invented or repurposed words’ (Jephta 2015, p. 179, see also Mesthrie 2004). Second, stemming from urban working-class or poorer segments as a result of historical imperatives, members of the community either live on the Cape Flats or share a close relation with its residents and culture, including the minstrel culture, and most commonly adhere to either Christian or Muslim faith.

Under a strict system of hierarchy and domination, the impact of Dutch and British rule in South Africa was brutal, bringing legalised racism, segregation, and active impoverishment. Throughout much of its history, racial differences and their hierarchical arrangements, have been used to legitimise white European supremacy as a strategy for justifying exploitation as the 'natural' order. Not surprisingly, race and ethnicity in South Africa have been the subject of much debate among scholars (see Bickford-Smith 2003; Cornell and Hartmann 2007; Haupt 2012). What some of the more recent studies have done is to suggest that 'ethnicity' has been replacing the concept of 'race' as South Africa distances itself from the years of apartheid. But as Bickford-Smith (2003, p. 2) points out, "'ethnic" prejudice can be just as destructive as the "racial" variety. Both can, and have, fuelled (...) racism'.

As a product of human perception, race is often used to describe a person's physical appearance while ethnicity relates to group identity, kinship and cultural associations. Ethnicity is also to be understood as the construction of boundaries through which social identities are defined, and can only exist through the differences that are imposed between the 'self' and the 'other' (Stokes 1994). Linked to "'traditional" dominant-class ideology' in South Africa, artificial dichotomies between one group and another, gradually introduced 'a three-tier social hierarchy' with whites above coloureds, and coloureds above blacks (Bickford-Smith 2003, p. 210). An early definition of coloured suggests that

Biologically, it has received contributions from all the peoples of South Africa; culturally, its affinities are with the dominant European group; economically, it shares the poverty and lack of opportunity of the great mass of the non-Europeans; politically and economically, it occupied a relatively favored position in the past, at least in the Cape, but today it finds itself bearing the first brunt of the racialist and segregationist policy of the new South African Nationalist government (Buchanan and Hurwitz 1950, p. 397).

Intentionally designed to hinder the advance of Black societies, this political strategy 'obscured the highly complicated social and psychological ambiguity of the coloured people, whose economic, political and social position makes them a marginal group' (Bloom 1967, p. 139). As a fluid category, however, the term also speaks to the multifaceted history of the people of South Africa, their diverse cultures, languages, customs and beliefs.

1.2.4 *Constructions of race and ethnicity*

Race is a social category '*that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies*' (Winant 2000, p. 171), so whenever I use the term race, quotation marks are always implied, and despite the many attempts of biologists to concur on the number of human races, the concept has been better explained as a product of human classification aimed at arranging

differences hierarchically. While race is often described as a set of bodily features that distinguishes one group from the other, 'determining which characteristics constitute the race is a choice humans make' (Cornell and Hartmann 2007, p. 24). Race therefore can only exist on the basis of contrast, or as a process of social construction for describing 'others', establishing boundaries between 'us' and 'them', and 'making clear that "they" are not "us"' (Cornell and Hartmann 2007, p. 27).

Skin colour and other bodily characteristics, and their associations with cultural predispositions, have shaped social organisations for a very long time. Most notably, classifications and stereotypes are first assigned by those who wish to organise social life in ways that are advantageous to them, so that 'in defining others, we implicitly define ourselves', which means that 'if "they" are evil', then, by contrast, "'we" must be good' (Cornell and Hartmann 2007, p. 29). This relationship involves the assumption of one group being superior, and therefore entitled to receiving the benefits of differential status. Part of the problem, however, is that those who are categorised as inferior tend to 'interiorise the inferiority ascribed to them by [those] in power and include it in the self-definition of their identity' (Martin 2013a, p. 5), hindering their chances of success and acceptance in the social mainstream.

As 'a product of interaction between diverse populations' (Cornell and Hartmann 2007, p. 31), racial and ethnic categories have also been used to undermine potential enemies, in an effort to diminish competition for land and resources. Even today, global processes like migration 'bring previously separated populations in contact with one another, a contact typically followed by competition' (Cornell and Hartmann 2007, p. 61). Social closure is the term often used to describe this social phenomenon, explained as a process of boundary construction in which one group retains privileges over certain resources while purposefully limiting others from access, in which case the purpose of monopolisation 'is always the closure of social and economic opportunities to *outsiders*' (Weber 1978, p. 342). Economic and political interests have therefore been closely associated with the formation of racial and ethnic identities, pushing to establish firm boundaries between South Africa's diverse population. Another relevant aspect of ethnicity in South Africa is again ascribed to the process of *creolisation*, referred to as the unpredictable formation of identities that results from 'intensified cross-pollination between original South African genres and foreign ones' (Martin 2013a, p. 94). This process 'involves the construction of an identity out of elements of ruling as well as subaltern cultures' (Erasmus 2001, p. 16).

Given the conditions of slavery, the near impossibility of recomposing the cultural systems of their regions of origin, and in particular of continuing to use their mother tongues, slaves had to, on the one hand, bring together every faintest trace that could have been preserved from their original cultures and, on the other, to 'borrow' from the masters' culture whatever could be used towards the reconstruction of their humanhood (Martin 2013a, p. 86).

In criticising non-racialism, political sociologist Gerhard Maré (2003) avers that we cannot ignore the existence of race in post-apartheid South Africa, as racial issues have not been divorced from associated struggles. Multi-racialism exists as part of a consumer society and should be examined as such. In the meantime, we need to acknowledge race and ethnicity as inherently fluid, and critically reflect upon the dynamics through which they are reproduced by economic, political, social and historical circumstances, ‘chang[ing] over time as people struggle to establish them, overcome them, assign other people to them, escape them, interpret them, and so on’ (Cornell and Hartmann 2007, p. 25). The point Maré (2003) makes in “‘Non-racialism’ in the struggle against apartheid” is that these categories continue to evolve in contemporary culture and should likewise be the subject of scrutiny beyond conventional discriminatory bias.

From race to ethnicity to class

In South Africa and most other developing nations, rapid cultural diversity as a result of emerging industrialised societies has brought ethnic groups in competition with one another. In *Europe and people without history*, Austrian anthropologist Eric Wolf makes a compelling case for how racial categories were stigmatised under capitalism as a way of ‘exclud[ing racialised cohorts] from the more highly paid jobs and from access to the information needed for their execution’ (Wolf 2010, p. 380). As a result of weakening competition from ‘below’, stigmatised cohorts would slowly lose their ability to exercise political influence, ‘forcing them back into casual employment and thereby intensifying competition among them for scarce and shifting resources’ (Wolf 2010, p. 381). The situation was no different during the Mineral Revolution in South Africa from the 1870s onward, which ‘fulled changes in Cape Town’s economic activity and demographic composition’, with a rapid growth in industrial workforce and ethnic divisions of labour (Bickford-Smith 2003, p. 210). Class and ethnicity are thus closely connected, making it difficult sometimes to distinguish one from the other.

While race, ethnicity, and class share similar patterns of exploitation, it is interesting to observe how certain forms of cultural capital have granted individuals the ability to overcome stereotypes and negotiate their membership in social strata and groups (Sterne 1997). For example, while ethnic prejudice against Romanis (Gypsies) in Eastern Europe is common, Romani musicians have managed to escape from the low ethnic status assigned to them by forging their identities as professional artists, while at the same time extending job opportunities, and enhancing their social status among the ethnically dominant elite (Beissinger 2001). The fact that *lăutari* (professional Romani musicians) have escaped the bad reputation ascribed to Romanis, shows how culture articulates social identities and memberships more broadly, especially in situations of ambiguity as in the case of the coloured people of Cape Town. Ethnicity, however, creates racialised class divisions that can escalate to inter-ethnic conflict and competition for limited resources. This is where the line between ethnicity and class becomes thinner, contributing

further to the marginalisation of black subjects and ‘erasure of race through class reductionism’ (Erasmus 2010, p. 256).

1.2.5 *Cultural marginalisation*

Despite economic growth over the post-apartheid period, inequalities in South Africa have actually risen because an increased share of income has moved to the top ten percent. Social grants have also become much more important as sources of income in the lower segment (Leibbrandt, Finn and Woolard 2012, p. 19). According to the World Bank (2008), the wealthiest 10 % of the population accounts for 58 % of the total income. On a more positive note, inequalities among racial cohorts are gradually moving closer to the national average as more South Africans experience upward social mobility. This is specially true among blacks, who in the past occupied the least privileged position in the country’s economic stratum. But as Seekings (2007, p. 13) points out, ‘[t]he rich are no longer all white, even if almost all white people are still rich’. As the gap widens *within* racial cohorts, similar patterns are presumably true of troupes, among which unequal distribution of resources is likely to create unequal opportunities, and while financial dependency on drug lords decreased, dependency on government aid increased.

Either way, inequality rates in South Africa are among the highest in the world, with wealth increasingly moving to the highest decile, and the urban poor continuing to suffer both economic and cultural marginalisation. Seekings (2007, p. 15) attributes both unemployment among unskilled workers and large gaps in the education system as the main contributors of poverty and inequality, both of which have been ‘accentuated by the growth of an “underclass” of people who suffer systematic disadvantage in the labour market’.

Under the aegis of a new democratic state following the elections of 1994, much of the country’s ‘already-stretched budgetary resources had to cover the hugely disadvantaged African areas, leaving fewer resources for coloured townships’ (Jensen 2004, p. 193). At the same time, a large portion of government subsidy from the municipal, provincial and state level, some of whom sought political support from the coloured majority, was allocated to the organising committee for funding a largely single ethnic event.⁸ With more funding involved, and in the struggle for economic power, some troupes are facing distinct disadvantage in their ability to win or even participate in carnival competitions.

Frequently, carnival participants complain about their political constraints and inabilities to participate in decision making processes. With feelings of powerlessness, members sometimes recourse to moving to a different troupe, quitting or even starting one of their own. Attempts to restore autonomy seem also to

⁸ To put the figures into perspective from various online sources, over a period of three years, the CTMCA received R50 million from the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund. In 2015, the Cape Cultural Events and Carnival Committee (CCCC) received R3.6 million from the City and an additional R2.4 million from the Western Cape government. In 2017, the CTCC announced it was allocating R6.1 million to the New Year festivities (February 2017, para. 1).

reflect local concerns over an increase in the number of troupes and troupe owners, many of whom they claim seek to participate in the share of gate fees and state funding. Team ownership therefore provides a chance to earn some capital outside the labour market, but as empirical evidence shows, communal interdependence is being pushed aside as pursuits for economic power begin to unfold. Namely, those who are able to extend financial networks and resources are more likely to exploit and subvert the music culture and increase their dominance in the game, revered by social ranks and the acquisition of bragging rights, prestige, and other tokens of status.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CHAPTERS

As a theoretical framework for Chapter 2, I have found *frustration–aggression hypothesis* useful (Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowrer and Sears 1939). The theory holds that when desired goals are thwarted, people become prone to aggression. By joining a troupe, individuals find ways of coping with unemployment or the alien world of menial labour, endowing them with opportunities to vent negative emotions and reinterpret their field of social action and well-being. Under historical circumstances and growing inequalities in South Africa, I have found Galtung’s work on peace studies relevant, in particular the notion of structural violence (1969), which states that inequitable social arrangements and institutions create harm against ‘those whose social status denies them access to the fruits of scientific and social progress’, in which case ‘neither culture nor pure individual will is at fault; rather, historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces conspire to constrain individual agency’ (Farmer 2001, p. 79).

I have also turned to resilience and self-reliance as concepts to explore how these individuals come to help themselves. In particular, I draw on the notion of *collective efficacy* (Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls 1997), defined as a collective effort to willingly control violence and deviance on behalf of the common good, and outside government control. Although still relatively new in music studies, the concept of resilience ‘refers to a system’s capacity to recover and maintain its integrity, identity, and continuity when subjected to forces of disturbance and change’ (Titon 2015, p. 158). More specifically, resilience defines the ways in which music cultures are able to not only survive and adapt to disturbances in the environment (violence, oppression, traumas, and so on) but also thrive, ‘guid[ing] the outcome toward a desirable end’ (Titon 2015, p. 158, see also Gaulier and Martin 2017).

In Chapter 3, I attempt to understand the nature of troupe competitions, for which I turn to *tournament theory* applied to professional sports (e.g. Downward, Dawson and Dejonghe 2009), trying to layout any crossovers with empirical observations and the small literature on music competitions (e.g. Gunderson and Barz 2000; McCormick 2015). The aim was to understand the reward scheme, motives and strategies for enticing players, as well as the effects of winning and losing,

team work and pride of the individual and group. Chapter 4 focuses on the more negative aspects of competition, drawing on notions of persuasion, control and manipulation, for which I draw largely on empirical discussion of how individuals compete for positions of power and status, as a way of framing reality against their position in the formal economy. Chapter 5 is a musicological analysis of the *ghoema* beat. In it, I draw on the work of Sandroni (2008) to reflect on the transformations of the *ghoema*, which freed itself from a more contrametric feel present in the music of former oppressors, symbolically representing an embodied experience of emancipation closely linked to the history of slavery. Finally, in Chapter 6, I explore the relationship between klopse and ethnicity, focusing on the effects of entraining with like-minded people and those who share common struggles. Specifically, I use Durkheim's concept of collective consciousness (1995) to explain how the conscious collective is imperative to establishing moral order and the continuity of parades and competitions.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This section sets out the methodology of the present research, situating the study amongst the ethnographic tradition of music research, with focus on the social structure of the *Kaapse Klopse* carnival in Cape Town, South Africa. As field-based research, the aim of this dissertation is to explore the implications of klopse in culture and society, and understand why participants engage in self-organised carnival competitions.

Most of the data collected during fieldwork is the result of participant observation and unstructured interviews conducted with troupe members and staff, musicians, coaches and band masters during 7 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Cape Town. The aim of conducting fieldwork was to experience klopse culture more closely, talk to the people involved, and generate discussions from empirical observation. As a qualitative study, I do not intend to make objective claims, but rather explore local concerns and attitudes expressed by a small sample of participants, which reflect broader reality but filtered through the subjective, phenomenological experience and positionings of my interlocutors and myself. This means that even when I make claims about carnival, they stem from my own experience with a few dozen musicians with whom I shared experiences more closely during a specific time frame. During several months observing the community, and steadily familiarising myself with the field, three main questions were developed:

- What is the impact of violence on the Cape Flats, and how are troupes contributing to the mitigation of physical and emotional distress?
- What are the functions and characteristics of klopse competitions, especially within socio-political struggles and as strategies of self-empowerment?
- How is klopse responding to the growing challenges of inequality and multiculturalism?

1.4.1 *Musical ethnography*

In the anthropological tradition of the studies of music (e.g. Merriam 1964; Blacking 1973), participant observation provides the opportunity to study society ‘from the perspective of musical performance’ (Seeger 1987, xiii) without making personal judgements on musical taste and quality⁹ (Seeger 1992). This field-based research method is known as musical ethnography and involves writing analytic descriptions of the ways in which people make music, or ‘how and why people make music’ (Rice 2014, p. 6). It also entails understanding ‘what music is and does in society’, and its effect ‘on the rest of social life’ (Seeger 1992, p. 99). A musical ethnography ‘does not have to correspond to an anthropology of music, since ethnography is not defined by disciplinary lines or theoretical perspectives, but rather by a descriptive approach to music’ (Seeger 1992, pp. 88–89). It draws primarily from empirical observation of musical performances to answer questions of broader ‘social and economic formations rather than music and other arts’ (Seeger 1987, xiii).

Given that all cultures are at some level enacted, all ethnography is, by definition, an ethnography of performance (Barz and Cooley 2008). Not all disciplines, however, concur with this definition. Whether musical or not, performances require the intention to perform, revealing oneself, or the enactment of someone or something else, to others through a sequence of symbolic acts. In studying human rituals, researchers then look at how performances not only communicate subjectivities, but also create identities, communities, and cultures. In his work among the Ndembu in Central Africa, Turner (1991, p. 11) showed how social conflicts among members of the group were deeply entrenched in ritual performances, and ‘that a multiplicity of conflict situations is correlated with a high frequency of ritual performance’. A cultural performance is thus ‘as much a part of the creation of social life as any part of life’ (Seeger 1987, p. 83). In other words, a ‘performance is not merely a way to express something, but is itself an aspect of what it is expressing’ (Rappaport 1979, p. 177). Through empirical observation of musical performances, the musical ethnographer *becomes* the instrument for collecting data and through it, interprets various aspects of the music culture.

1.4.2 *Musical participation*

At the core of anthropological field research is participant observation. As a research method, musical participation falls within the anthropological studies of music as an extension of traditional fieldwork techniques, and ‘a bridge between

⁹ Ethnomusicologists define ‘musical’ not as talent or ability, but rather as ‘the capacity of humans to create, perform, organize cognitively, react physically and emotionally to, and interpret the meanings of humanly organized sounds’ (Rice 2014, p. 1). Whether performing, composing, rehearsing, listening, or dancing, human action is always implied, hence the term *musicking*, ‘the present participle, or gerund, of the verb *to music*’, (Small 2011, p. 9), shifting the concept of music as a product to music as a *process*. From a perspective of local discourse among jazz musicians, music evaluation is subsumed under ‘group dynamics and participatory conventions’, and can be characterised as a form of mutual engagement (Tsioulakis 2013, p. 220).

anthropological and musicological modes of analysis' (Rice 2014, p. 34). Both methods demand great commitment from the ethnographer and require establishing rapport with individuals in the community and eventually becoming a member of the group. This proximity 'enhances validity of [preexisting] data, strengthens interpretation, lends insights into the culture, and helps the researcher formulate meaningful questions' (Myers 1992, p. 29). As with participant observation, musical participation also provides the researcher with the opportunity to gain a more vivid understanding of the participants' view point by sharing spontaneous parts of their lives and experiencing their reference system and narratives more closely. It also involves reciprocity with those with whom we share experiences through persistent intercultural dialogue between researchers and subjects (Freire 2000; Araújo 2008), shifting away from objectified notions of music that separate 'their' music from 'our' music. That is, when we dance, sing and play, 'our very being merges with the "field" through our bodies and voices, and another Self-Other boundary is dissolved' (Barz and Cooley 2008, p. 183).¹⁰

The idea of musical participation as a research technique is not new.¹¹ Many argue that by being able to play with the group studied, and sharing music as a common experience, ethnomusicologists and other musically trained ethnographers have certain advantages in terms of data collection. Drawing from his experience with Afghan music, Baily (2001, p. 96) contends that the ability to learn and perform musics from other cultures 'provides privileged access to the *actualité*' of the studied community, as well as 'insights into the relationship between performance and social context'. Most importantly, perhaps, it facilitates access into the social and private lives of musicians *in situ*, with whom experiences are more easily shared. But while there are distinct advantages in conducting participant observation, drawbacks are also true. First, '[t]he closer you are to a situation, the less of an overall view you have' (Titon, Cooley, Locke, McAllester and Rasmussen 2008, p. 368). Researchers in this position need to 'make a special effort to be an outsider and take nothing for granted' (Titon et al. 2008, p. 368), continuously developing what Spradley (1980) calls 'explicit awareness', or the ability to remember ordinary events. In the same way, balancing participation and observation can become challenging as the field eventually becomes too familiar. Researchers in this situation may find themselves expressing personal views as 'generally accepted truth[s]', rather than 'bias[es] coming from inside the music-culture' (Titon et al. 2008, p. 368). Also, as musicians, *fieldplay* can sometimes take precedence over *fieldwork* in rather unprofitable ways if no distinctions are made between epistemological methods associated with formalised fieldwork procedures and 'the ontological process of becoming a musician' (Barz and Cooley 2008, p. 48).

Most of my experience as a participant observer was based as a percussionist

¹⁰ "Though one objective of ethnography is to understand others, reflexive fieldworkers realize that "we get to know other people by making *ourselves* known to *them*, and through them to know ourselves again, in a continuous cycle'" (Barz and Cooley 2008, p. 20).

¹¹ A few notable examples include Hood (1960); Merriam (1964); Blacking (1973); Seeger (1987); Myers (1992); Baily (2001); Reily (2002); Magowan (2007); Barz and Cooley (2008).

with the troupe Cape Argus District Six Entertainers, through connections made at the University of Cape Town during my first visit to Cape Town in July 2014. My presence in the field, however, was not always easy to explain, and I was sometimes confused with a newspaper reporter, especially at times when a camera was hanging on my neck. My presence as a drummer, on the other hand, was less ambiguous to them and more natural to me, as I was already familiar with playing drums.¹² At times when my face was covered in paint and glitter, and a traditional drum was strapped over my shoulder, hardly anyone could really tell I was an outsider. In the end, being a drummer in the Super League and participating in competitions gave me a sense of purpose in the troupe, which I attribute to my acceptance in the group and everyone who placed their trust in me. But my deepest and most intimate memories are playing the barrel-shaped hand drum, known as *gummy*, which unlike the drum set, taught me the subtle intricacies of the game and how to be one of them, if only as much as I was able to learn.

Naturally, there will always be differences in how humans think and feel, but perhaps there is some hope for cross-cultural understanding. As Blacking (1973, p. 111) had already observed, ‘to feel with the body is probably as close as anyone can ever get to resonating with another person’. Through musical participation, the ethnographer embodies a type of knowledge that speaks from the perspective of the subject, or at least close to it, wiring important connections between participants and the observer, and making the observer less reliant on reading over the shoulder of those to whom the knowledge belongs.

1.4.3 *Unstructured interview*

In qualitative research, recorded interviews are often used to produce ethnographic data and validate field notes. In simple terms, an interview is a one-on-one conversation about a common subject, and constitutes a basic dyadic mode of human interaction with which most people are already familiar. In conducting interviews, the ethnographer then seeks to unfold how a person conceptualises the world in his or her terms, helping to dissipate the ethnographer’s authority by sharing authorship with those with whom (and of whom) we speak.

Interview techniques vary depending on the nature of the study (see Kvale 2008; Bernard 2011). With no intentions of preempting local concerns, my intentions in the field were strictly exploratory. With no detailed hypothesis either, I limited my choices to unstructured face-to-face interviews in the hope of extracting relevant ethnographic patterns through coding and data mining techniques, a mixed-method approach that combines the use of quantitative research tools with qualitative data. Distinguished from informal interviews, unstructured interviews have nothing informal about it, ‘and nothing deceptive, either’ (Bernard 2011, p. 211). This is because, different from an informal conversation or chitchat,

¹² I am a trained percussionist from Brazil with experience in the field of popular music. Previous ethnographic research include carnival blocos in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

both parties are well aware that an interview is taking place irrespective of how the questions are asked. Unstructured interviews provide minimum control over how people respond, encouraging participants to lead the conversation, and eventually revealing topics that are of relevance to them, instead of answering a set of pre-arranged questions prepared by the ethnographer. But while allowing participants to frame their story lines at their own pace and in their own terms, unstructured interviews always run the risk of either being too open or digressing from the main subject too often. For the majority of those with whom I spoke, however, this risk was usually offset by the fact that their social lives were deeply intertwined with klopse, not simply through leisure associations but through lifestyle choices and the makeup of their identities. In the end, they enjoyed talking about carnival irrespective of who I was or how much interest I showed in what they had to say.

Spanning between July 2014 and May 2015, I conducted a total of thirty recorded unstructured interviews (29:08:18 hours), of which five were follow-ups, with a mean time of 58:16 minutes. Interviews were recorded at various places, often at their homes or in places where they felt more comfortable. The audio was captured with a digital recorder with built-in stereo condenser microphones with x/y configuration. All of my consultants were fluent in English and many spoke English as their first language, in which case interpreters were not needed for interviews. As a non-native English speaker myself, the problem was sometimes the other way round, for instance when they did not understand what I said. In any case, most often consultants were talkative enough that I rarely interrupted them. In rare cases, however, consultants would pause signalling that they were ready for the next question. I always had a vague plan in my head of what to ask, and tried to follow up on what they had already said, but in general these interviews were not always productive and defeated some of the purpose of *them* leading the conversation.

1.4.4 *Data gathering*

Pre-coding. Qualitative researchers collect data usually in the form of non-quantifiable empirical information, which often include interview transcripts and field notes. This material is then processed through coding techniques aimed at organising data and extracting meaningful information from data sources. Having no ‘all-seeing eyes, all-hearing ears, and total recall’, fieldworkers rely heavily on producing records of their experience (Titon et al. 2008, p. 374). Data gathered in this study include field and diary notes, interview transcripts, photographs, field recordings, and printed newspaper clippings.

Field and diary notes

Field notes are descriptive and reflective records of particular social events observed by the ethnographer during fieldwork. Depending on the level of my interaction, the first sketchings often began at the actual site of the performance,

as I always carried along a pocket notebook and pencil to jot down notes quickly, usually names of people and places, phone numbers, directions, and personal reminders, as well as stories I heard, networks and roles that people played in and outside the group. After a day (or night) in the field, I would then sit at the computer when it was quieter and expand these bulleted notes with more thoughtful descriptions of the event, tearing out the annotated pages as I moved forward, and leaving the notebook empty for the next session. Field notes were sorted by date in a single file using a date tree structure (Example 1.1), keeping a chronological account of events and avoiding the extra cognitive process of deciding the title of notes.

* Fieldnotes	1
* January	2
* 2017-01-01...	3
* 2017-01-02...	4
	5
* Diary	6
* January	7
* 2017-01-01 19:48...	8
* 2017-01-01 21:55...	9

Example 1.1: Field and diary notes in Org-mode, an extension of the Emacs text editor. Note that 3rd level headings are folded, making it easy to toggle the outline visibility of notes. Folding a heading, automatically hides its content, and indicates the hidden content with an ellipsis at the end of the heading.

I also kept a diary in the same file to write short personal thoughts and reactions in the hope of making myself more aware of ‘personal biases’ (Bernard 2011, p. 391). Distinguished from field notes, diary notes were shorter and more intimate annotations of how I felt, never extending beyond a few lines or words, which meant that I could write a few of them in a single day. Not any different from what I was already using, I also kept a calendar of scheduled appointments and deadlines, and a list of things I needed to do and people I needed to call.

Interview transcripts

Despite ‘a traditional lack of attention among social scientists to the linguistic medium they work with’ (Kvale 2008, p. 92), transcription underpins an important stage of ethnographic writing. More specifically, transcription provides written records of language and events, and constitutes the primary means by which transcripts are produced. ‘A transcript is [thus] a translation from one narrative mode – oral discourse – into another narrative mode – written discourse’ (Kvale 2008, p. 93). In anthropology and other social sciences, a transcription is the systematic attempt to convey meaning of cultural practices by giving preeminence to indigenous concerns and taxonomy, as a form of (ethno)methodology, from which grounded research topics are then drawn and conceived. As in the case of Skinner (2012, p. 2), ‘interviews overshadowed my fieldnotes and became the

core of my writings, leaving fieldnotes to become timelines and context points’. It is therefore important to outline, if only briefly, some of the methods I used to produce transcripts and their accompanying conventions, which I describe in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: List of transcription symbols

()	inaudible or unrecognisable utterance
(dummy)	dubious utterance or an estimate of what was said
[dummy]	text added
((dummy))	descriptive commentary
<i>dummy</i>	foreign words
<u>dummy</u>	emphasis
(...)	omission
...	short pause
:	prolongation of the immediately prior sound
*	truncation of vulgar language
-	a cut-off

There are various methods for transcribing interviews and other types of live social interactions. Most notably, the fields of interaction linguistics and conversation analysis, and in particular the works of Jefferson (2004), have come a long way in terms of rendering detailed technical transcripts of both verbal and non-verbal communication. A distinguishing feature in these types of transcriptions are the level of detail in representing utterances, like underscore markings to indicate stress of pitch and/or amplitude, and brackets to indicate points of overlap onset. They also make good use of pauses and go as far as indicating in breath and out breath (·hhh and hhh, respectively), as well as sound prolongation and speech velocity (see Jefferson 2004, pp. 24–31). But as much as these guidelines provide more accurate representations of speech, in my case the level of detail was offset by the time needed to complete the task.

Fast transcription of speech requires a combination of ergonomic shortcut commands and a decent speed controller, ideally that keeps the pitch stable. For the purpose, I used a combination of automatic capitalisation, and a concept known as key chord, which binds commands to a combination of key strokes: Either two keys pressed simultaneously on the keyboard (e.g. jk), or a single key pressed twice (e.g. jj), enabling quick access to frequently used commands, like pausing, rewinding, incrementing speed, and inserting the speaker’s ID, while keeping the fingers close to the home row. For playing back audio, I used a combination of EMMS (Emacs Multimedia System) with MPlayer as the backend, and a few commands to automate parts of the process.

The setup worked well for the most part, but I still needed to synchronise bits of text with the sound data, so I came up with a set of functions that allowed playing back tracks at a given time stamp. Then each time a new person speaks, a new time stamp is added automatically next to the name as a hypertext with

the corresponding track position. Now clicking on the time stamp plays back the audio at the position specified in the link. For convenience, exporting transcripts to any other format automatically removes all time stamps.

A total of 81 278 words from 30 interviews were transcribed in the English language with some interspersed Afrikaans terminologies. The first 8 interviews conducted between July and August of 2014 were transcribed three months prior to joining the band in November 2014, helping to paint my initial impression of what to expect of the carnival season. The remaining set of interviews were transcribed *after* fieldwork, mostly during the university's summer break in 2015.

Photography

Photography has a long established tradition in documenting ethnographic research, but only recently has it gained attention as a more formalised research method in the human and social sciences, shifting from realist visual records to 'contemporary approaches that engage with subjectivity, reflexivity and the notion of the visual as knowledge and a critical "voice"' (Pink 2003, p. 180). Confessedly, my relationship with photography was rather meagre, although I do see great potential in participatory photography 'as a means to enable the investigator to gain perceptual access to the world from the viewpoint of individuals who have not traditionally held control over the means of imaging the world' (Berg 2004, p. 205). At times when I was less involved with activities that required my physical presence and attention, I carried a 24.2-megapixel DSLR camera with 12 bit resolution, which mostly served to produce chronological reminders of social events and supplement field notes (see Section 1.1.1).¹³ As often requested by troupe members, I also shared these photographs with them.

With the exception of interviews, all audio/visual recordings, including photographs, were captured on public spaces, usually music gatherings and other appropriate settings where my presence as a photographer was always easily noticed. When unsure, especially during the early stages of fieldwork and because I was often dealing with a large number of people, I would always approach group leaders for their permission to record. I was also granted a press/media accreditation card which gave me access to the internals of the stadium where group meetings and practices were held, as well as the playing field where I could get very close to the performers on stage. I was only denied entry at the top of the stadium where adjudication occurred, probably due to my connection to one of the troupes and the potential for bribing the judges, as some consultants suggested. The card was also valid for the official road march, which in 2015 took place on 17 January, coinciding with my partner's visit to Cape Town. As a better and more experienced photographer, she took over my role as a photographer, allowing me to concentrate on playing and socialising with fellow members in the troupe. As a

¹³ See also *One love, ghoema beat: Inside the Cape Town Carnival* by John Mason (2010b), and 'The Minstrel Essay', documentary photography by Juhan Kuus, available at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/kuusjuhan/albums/72157638576799855> (Online; accessed 29 August 2017).

result, she was able to take close to 1500 pictures that day from the inside of the barricade separating performers and spectators. In general, participants were always very receptive to being photographed and many even approached us asking to be photographed along with their families and peers.

Photographs were sequential excerpts of performances and time lines of events that I could revisit from time to time, and whose meanings changed over time as the research matured and new interrogations were developed. Albeit I was allowed to record inside people's houses, during small family gatherings and religious ceremonies, I was often deterred from doing so at my own discrepancy and intuition, choosing field notes over photography as a less intrusive device for capturing these types of events. In any case, there was still a lot to explore in terms of musical performances. Not only did performances extend several hours, sometimes the entire day or night, but they also extended several months considering all the weekly rehearsals held at the *klopskamer* and beyond. Performances were also evoked post hoc, during the weeks and months following the end of the season, whereby participants gathered to watch and discuss past performances, bragging on their achievements and vindicating their losses. Performances therefore permeate a much wider time frame that would otherwise be difficult to capture with the human memory alone.¹⁴

In general, photographs and videos captured the mind state and spirit that these performances evoke, revealing joy, triumph, and foolishness, which have become deceptively scarce in modern society. Especially during the pre-season, photographs revealed hard work and sacrifice among members of the group. They also revealed the excitement of preparation, the exhilaration during performances, and the shabby looks afterwards, with shoes and uniforms worn off with dust, faces smudged with sweat and paint, lips busted and hands blistered. Participants are nonetheless drawn by the experience, giving them the opportunity to act foolish, laugh together, and sometimes engage in unlawful behaviour, creating long lasting emotional bonds among members of the group.

Field recordings

Field recordings are sounds captured with portable equipment outside acoustically controlled spaces. The process focuses on capturing sounds, including music and other humanly created sounds, in the same location and conditions in which they

¹⁴ For managing photographs, I used a shell script to move files from the camera's memory card and into a temporary folder. A shell script is a set of commands for the computer to execute, which would otherwise have to be entered manually. The script then reads the metadata of these files and automatically renames them with the exact date of when the photo was taken (e.g. yyyy-mm-dd_hhmmss.JPG), moving them again into their corresponding date tree directory. I also used a set of commands to append keywords to one or multiple files when skimming the images (e.g. yyyy-mm-dd_hhmmss--keyword.JPG), which I can use to group multiple images with similar content when searching files. Workflows like this prevent users becoming dependent on software vendors, and 'unable to switch to different vendor (...) without undertaking substantial switching costs' (Opara-Martins, Sahandi and Tian 2014, p. 93), creating long-term solutions that give researchers control of the technology.

are produced. As a research method of music ethnography, field recordings serve three main purposes: to reexamine selective parts of the performance, contribute to digital sound archives, and produce knowledge on any aspect of the performance, or the social context at which they occur. They are also powerful stimuli for engaging participants in discussions and reflecting on their personal concerns (Berg 2004), ‘especially when communities previously deprived of [recording] capacities’ (Araújo 2008, p. 28) gain access to those capacities and ‘share this information with those who are in control (policy makers, politicians, health professionals, educators, etc.)’ (Berg 2004, p. 205).

My recordings were captured with the same device used for interviews, except I sometimes used a windshield when recording out in the open.¹⁵ On special occasions I also hooked the recorder to the camera’s input jack for producing better quality videos, which I sometimes used as gifts for my colleagues in the troupe. As with photographs, field recordings allowed me to revisit at any given time the context at which they occurred and reflect on those experiences, sometimes accompanied by troupe colleagues. For example, they showed the contrast between the traditional sounds of *klopse* and the more marginalised sounds of the *atjas* playing on low-tuned drums and precarious instruments, pointing to the social and economic imbalances among troupes. They also revealed the glory of triumph when even before results were announced members of the pack hopped in joy across the stadium singing their fight song as a marker of confidence and intimidation.

1.4.5 *Data analysis*

Coding

Coding is the process by which data is organised, and consists of assigning summative labels/codes to smaller segments of data, and grouping them ‘into categories or “families” because they share some characteristic – the beginning of a pattern’ (Saldaña 2009, p. 8). In essence, coding breaks down data into more tangible units, and serves as a ‘pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data’ (Charmaz 2006, p. 46). There are various programs designed for the purpose, but none of them will do the actual coding; they simply provide more effective means for storing and managing coded material. As mentioned by Ronggui (2016), code categories facilitate theory development, which involves moving concepts of different levels of abstraction, and organising those concepts according to their logical relationship.

R is a decent choice for general data manipulation, and provides an extensible and well-developed free software infrastructure for a number of text mining applications. R is also compatible with Emacs, from where researchers can edit, compile, and run R scripts. For coding, in particular, I used the *RQDA* package, which is a complete text-based *CAQDAS* by design, although it comes with a mouse-centric GUI (graphical user interface) that might discourage Emacs users in general. A

¹⁵ For listening instructions, see Appendix A on page 177.

total of 144 codes were produced in the last cycle of coding. Each one of these codes were then grouped under at least one of the following 13 categories: competition, economy, group relations, healing, music, native categories, politics, power, recognition, social capital, social cohesion, and violence (Figure 1.5). Codes related to religion, gender, and other slightly unrelated topics were grouped under ‘other’, as well additional self-contained information that were not intended under neither one of the other categories. Codes also belonged to either one of 4 variables: klopse (18), CTC (8), both (1), or neither of the two carnivals (2).

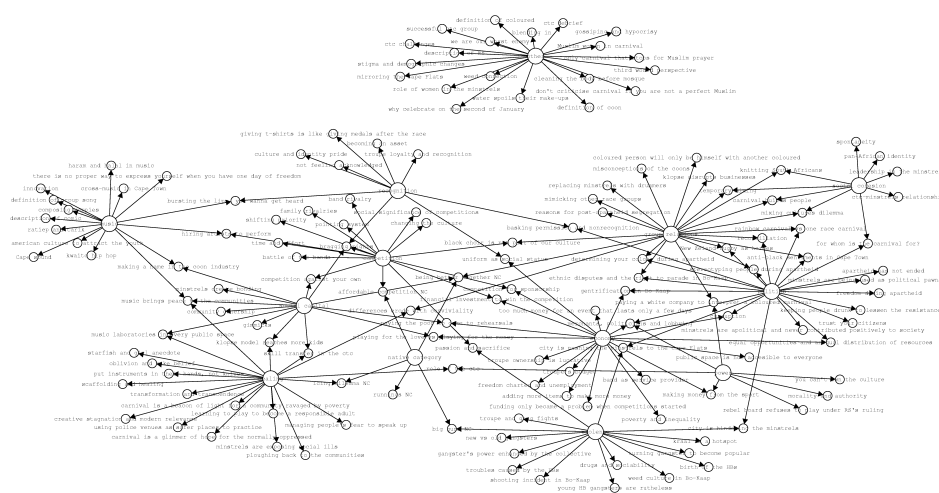


Figure 1.5: Code categories and relationships

Figure 1.5 shows the relationships between codes nested under code categories. There is a lot to be said from the graph. For example, one relationship between politics and violence categories points to how the city council is supposedly hindering klopse from parading in the CBD area, through which consultants feel they are being pushed back to the Cape Flats. Linked by music and social capital categories on the left side of the graph, the notion that music protects the community is also important, alongside social and emotional factors supposedly contributing to carnival's resilience. Feelings of self-worth, bursting the lips to be heard, becoming an asset in the troupe, bragging rights, symbols of status, striving for success in competitions, and recovering from failures all point in the same direction.

Text mining

Like coding, the purpose of text mining is to extract patterns from textual data, and provide alternative means for interpreting data and producing knowledge, if only to complement traditional forms of qualitative research methods. In essence, text mining transforms text segments into structured representations from which statistical methods can then be applied, like clusters, classifications, word clouds (Figure 1.6), term frequency in one or several documents, and so on. Text mining is generally performed with large data sets, like mailing list archives where parti-

(a) All sources combined

(b) Printed newspaper clippings

(c) Klopse-related transcripts

(d) Klopse-CTC comparison

Both coding and text mining help identify important anchors in the research that will eventually lead to more encompassing categories to explain social and cultural patterns shared by a group of people. Yet, even among experienced coders, preparing data for analysis is time consuming, and does not always happen in a linear way. Unveiling data mining techniques and learning how to use these emerging technologies are also a challenge. Overall, coding collaboration and textual data archives could significantly improve the validity of the analysis without overriding the subjective stance of the researcher.

1.4.6 *Research ethics*

Research ethics can be traced back to 1945 and the Nuremberg trials, as a response to hazardous medical research practices undertaken by Nazi physicians during World War II (Guillemin and Gillam 2004). Emerging protocols initially focused on bio medical research and were later extended across various disciplines involving humans, including those under the human and social sciences. Research ethics is now a staple and well thought procedure, serving as a set of standards for determining appropriate conducts when engaging with human subjects in ways that provide the best possible protection for those participating in the study.

Prior to the implementation of the research, the protocol of this research was reviewed and approved by the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics (HAPP), providing the initial checklist of potential risks and safeguards to consider. In field-based research, however, the potential for harming participants is often discrete, and can happen in a number of ways, making it difficult to spell out concrete strategies (Guillemin and Gillam 2004). Ethical decisions were also based on the guidelines for good research practice provided by the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (ASA), helping to anticipate potential problems and avoid harming participants and the scholarly community.

Consultants. When engaging with consultants, an effort was made to explain beforehand the purpose of the research, making it clear what was expected from them and the implications and outcome of their contribution. Some consultants have also made revisions in parts of the research, helping to steer my attention to various topics discussed in this dissertation. Also, despite the inevitable limitations of doing research abroad, I still maintain a good relationship with participants, and I hope to have honoured their trust. I have also avoided consent forms and the formality that these procedures entail, in favour of verbally assuring their welfare and the trust established among ourselves. In general, consultants expressed acknowledgement in the interest I showed in their knowledge, and one consultant even went as far as pledging me to ‘get this word out’. Yet, as much as sharing authorship with participants and weaving their voices in the text makes justice to how participants are represented, anthropologists always run the risk of ‘not adequately respect[ing] the autonomy of the individual – that it is an individual’s right to act according to his or her own purposes rather than the purposes of others’ (Guillemin and Gillam 2004, p. 271). For Guillemin and Gillam (2004, pp. 271–272),

This tension can be resolved (...) if the subjects of the research take up the goals of the research as their own; they are then not being used as mere means or tools by the researchers. In other words, in making the research their own project jointly with the researchers, they become *participants* in the research rather than *subjects*.

In practice, getting participants espoused in the project when many are struggling to escape poverty and their own exclusion from the social mainstream is

not an easy task, although everyone who did contribute did so voluntarily, to some extent making the research a collaborative craft. While foreign to research ethics, participatory mode of musical ethnography provides the way forward to counter-hegemonic forms of knowledge production (Araújo 2008). As ‘musical processes and products are permanently mediated by power relations’, participatory research provides the opportunity to deflect vertical arrangements through which participants consciously engage in all stages of the research project. This can be achieved through persistent dialogue and negotiation with research subjects, who then participate, systematically, in the collection, translation, and interpretation of data, granting greater credit for those whose perspectives are not traditionally framed (Araújo 2008, p. 28).

Confidentiality. Other relevant considerations in research ethics include minimising intrusions on privacy, anonymising sources, and preserving confidential information. Most of these privacy-related concerns I was able to ensure through encryption procedures that protects all on data on disk, including oral and visual records, from unauthorised access. Encryption is still the most reliable form of ensuring privacy, and it is very unfortunate that human subjects research policies and guidelines fail to address the issue.¹⁶

Even though ‘watertight confidentiality has proved to be impossible’ (Christians 2011, p. 66), anonymising sources is one way of ensuring some privacy among research subjects. Even under consensual agreements, the choice of disclosing information can change over time, so I never gave them the option not to remain anonymous. But while pseudonyms help minimise intrusions on privacy, managing pseudonyms can become cumbersome when working with long documents. One solution to this problem is to anonymise sources only in the final (PDF) version of the document, but not in the draft version itself, preventing the cognitive load of having to decide which pseudonym to use. For pseudonyms, I kept the gender and ethnic origin of their original names. All pseudonyms are hyperlinked, referencing additional demographic and biographic information on page xii, which also contains back references to all occurrences in the text where the consultant was cited.

There are also practical implications to confidentiality. For example, domestic violence in South Africa is a perennial problem and the numbers are exceptionally high, especially among uneducated and low-income households. Under these circumstances, women and children often lack the necessary means to escape ‘emotional and economic dependency on the abuser’ (Kaminer and Eagle 2010, p. 16), but when they do, especially when criminal charges are filed, victims require protection from further abuses. For the purpose, there are certain ‘homes’ and informal institutes on the Cape Flats providing such services, free of charge, in collaboration with music organisations, some of which from what I saw are doing

¹⁶ As of 24 April 2017, neither the American Sociological Association nor the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and the Commonwealth mention encryption in their guidelines.

outstanding work to mitigate these challenges, although there is much need for those involved to remain outside the spotlight. As one musician said, 'I don't want to be recognised for what we do here, people mustn't know what we do, otherwise maybe if the guy comes out of prison, he'll know where his people are' (personal communication, 2015). In a context of increasing marginality, stories around *klopse* can escalate to very sensitive topics, starting from band members not being able to take instruments home because, when they do, family members steal their instruments to buy drugs, and going on as far as murders, stabbings, sexual harassment and other abuses. In the next chapter I will go over the fieldwork site, some of my earnest experiences as a participant observer, and the ethnographic setting of the research.

2 *From violence to music and back*

I remember the cold breeze and dimmed lights at night as I walked up and down the quaint cobblestone slopes that separated us from the dull asphalt of the city. Night walks brought forth intimate gatherings on street corners and ragged stairways to roll dagga cigarettes, chat and gaze at the glowing city from above. If only to see the world a little different, city lights furthest away merged in the horizon to form what looked like shiny strips of gold, a sharp contrast to the minuscule light of the burning dagga and dark mountains behind. Along the poignant scenery were puffs of thin smoke hovering and fading, an expression of detachment to the mainstream ahead and complicity in the value chain of the bullets that killed Adam and others like him.

I arrived in Cape Town in July 2014 to conduct fieldwork with the Cape minstrels, collecting most of the data between July 2014 and May 2015, during which I was formally invested as a participant observer with both Cape Town Carnival (CTC) and the troupe Cape Argus District Six Entertainers (D6), former Santam District Six Entertainers.¹ I was also involved with members of District Six Hanover Minstrels,² one of the few troupes still active in the District Six area where much of the Black population was forcibly evicted during the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s as a result of the Group Areas Act (GAA), which assigned racial groups to designated areas aimed at reducing their interaction, and posing stringent constraints on carnival and its community.

The prospect of living in Cape Town, especially on the Cape Flats, was both exciting and intimidating. On the one hand, I knew people whose reaction to Cape Town were the best possible, on the other hand, I also knew the potential

¹ Troupe names often begin with the name of the company sponsoring the troupe, hence the prefix Cape Argus (newspaper), or Santam (insurance company). Although not directly related to any of the carnivals, I also played drums for the UCT Big Band and performed a number of gigs with them during my time in the field. While there was no particular reason for joining the band as far as research goes, the experience revealed the contrast between klopse and the next generation of professional musicians in Cape Town. The majority of players were young white middle-class students with the notable exception of at least two coloured students, both of whom were outstanding jazz musicians living on the Cape Flats, and also involved in klopse activities.

² The troupe recently merged with Fabulous Woodstock Starlites and is now called Original District Six-Woodstock Starlites.

gap between fieldwork and the tourist milieu from which they spoke. Having had some experience on both sides, it is clear that government reforms are 'biased toward the creation of "world-class" business nodes and areas of elite' that are not easily accessible to many of those living on the outskirts of the city (McDonald 2012, p. 100). For example, the aerial cable way that takes visitors to the top of Table Mountain provides free ticket for every South African on the day of their birthdays, but the question raised was: 'If I live in Samora [black township], how do I get to the lower cable station [and] enjoy this privilege that I have as a citizen? (...) If I live in Samora, how?' (Jacob, personal communication, 23/4/2015). For residents of Samora and other townships, access to the Central Business District (CBD) is expensive and time-consuming, 'making it near impossible [for the lower class] to fully integrate into, or be a part of, the rapid globalisation of the city' (Jephta 2015, p. 173), where public spaces are being firmly controlled (see Mitchell 2003). While racist policies are no longer the root cause of segregation and inequality, previously disempowered communities still face distinct disadvantage in their ability to use, shape, and inhabit city spaces, and overcome historic and economic challenges. Put simply, 'the city, in terms of culture, is moving in one direction and the community that created the carnival [klopse] is moving in another direction, and they are not finding common chords' (Zachary, personal communication, 24/7/2014).

Disruptive parades. Despite gentrification of carnival's historic centre, troupes still gather en masse for their traditional procession with shockingly loud township music, 'dancing while in perpetual motion – within public spaces where they [are] free to gather (in theory if not always in practice) without restriction' (Sakakeeny 2010, p. 5), proclaiming and to some extent defending their territory, or as Baxter (1996, p. 187) puts, 'an historical route to a territorial claim'. That is, 'to walk and to dance through the city is to insist on space, to demand space, and perhaps sometimes to find it' (Davids 2013, p. 94). In the context of slavery and oppression, parades were a way of signalling their existence, 'declaring themselves visible in a world that had insisted on their expedient invisibility. Their walking, dancing, and singing filled not just a physical space, but produced a noise which proclaimed their right to fill years of public silence' (Davids 2007, p. 120).

As an 'annual organised "migration"' (Jephta 2015, p. 165),³ carnival facilitates 'the reunion of people who have been separately categorised and isolated from each other, as much as was possible with political engineering' (Martin 2013a, p. 339), and provide opportunities to reclaim ownership of the city space, if only for a short while not as migrant labourers, creating a liminal space between residency and migrancy in which space and place are ultimately contested. 'Moving through

³ 'The notion of the "Cape Coloured migrant" may exist in several forms: as one situated between a self-created identity and a national discourse; as one located in the liminal space of what can and cannot be called "home" while in search of work or economic opportunity; or as one who moves across visible or invisible boundaries' (Jephta 2015, p. 168).

space requires an orientation *to* space, and sound is one way that people orient themselves to one another and to the environments that they cohabit' (Sakakeeny 2010, p. 4). In recent years, however, the minstrels have been facing contentious dramas around their activities, propelled by increasing globalisation and shaped by bureaucratic impositions, with domineering accusations on both sides and many acting in favour of establishing curfews and designated areas for the parades.

In spite of struggles to maintain community values and carnival's historic site, the annual procession creates important bridges between the high-tech urban core and the impoverished peripheries, where many of them were forced to live, as 'a kind of diasporic return' (Inglese 2016, p. 92), whereby participants are able to validate the group's existence and identity, providing them with the opportunity to symbolically reclaim their belonging, which also 'operate[s] as a significant inversion of urban power relations and the city's socio-political geography' (Baxter 1996, p. 192). Under existing conditions, carnival has become

a singular force that contests and occupies circumscribed public space; as a means of mourning and remembering the dislocation and dispossession brought about by the apartheid-era Group Areas Act of 1950; and as a political and cultural mechanism that pits the disenfranchised against institutionalized power (Davids 2013, p. 89).

Historically, the festival has been a channel through which slaves and former slaves have been able to strengthen cohesion and solidarity. Presently, however, even if this channel retains some relevance in the face of poverty and inequality, political agendas are posing new threats to the carnival, subject to ever-increasing bureaucratic restrictions and stringent regulations. Similarly, with the professionalisation of carnival and subsequent growth of commercial interests within the festival, klopse's transgressive appeal is being reduced, threatening the ethos of self-sufficiency and communal cooperation through inevitable tensions between social and financial exchange.⁴

There are presently two distinct carnivals in Cape Town, each with their own separate agendas. As a fieldwork research area, the intersection of both carnivals readily exposes the current political scenario of increasing political and economic dominance on one side and micro-politics of resistance on the other (Scott 1990), 'shift[ing] some of their burdens of social welfare provision and responsibilities onto the individual citizens' (Bayat 2010, p. 55). Having established that both carnivals are imperative to painting a more accurate representation of Cape Town, in the first part of the chapter I will reflect upon my experiences in the field and suggest that, as symptoms of deeper divisions, klopse carnival promotes resilience and social cohesion within violent neighbourhoods. I will then discuss some of the political challenges that characterised post-1994 South Africa.

⁴ As one troupe owner told me, some musicians are in it 'for the love of the sport', while others are in it 'for the love of the money' (Akil, personal communication, 29/7/2014).



(a) Main carnival areas. Furthest on the left is Bo-Kaap, D6's headquarters. District Six is the carnival's heritage site and where the main road march begins. Troupes gather at Keizersgracht street and march all the way up Rose Street, in Bo-Kaap (Figure 1.4). Klopse competitions were held at the Athlone Stadium.

(b) Distance to and from Bo-Kaap. The three points furthest on the right, situated to the southeast of District Six are common parade areas on the Cape Flats and home to a large number of carnival participants. The distance between Mitchells Plain and Bo-Kaap is roughly 29 kilometres via the N2 highway.

Figure 2.1: Fieldwork site

2.1 ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING AND VIOLENCE

2.1.1 *Early stages of fieldwork*

Fieldwork started slowly in the first month whilst living at a friend's house in Woodstock. I was about 5 km from the CBD on one direction and 3.5 km from the University of Cape Town (UCT) on the opposite direction. At the time, most consultants were involved with Ramadan and klopse activities were still dormant, making it difficult at that point to step inside the community. I also found it difficult to move around the city, as most places were often too far away. Many areas were also not safe, and I needed some time to make the right connections before entering township areas. In the meantime, I took the opportunity to familiarise myself with the city, visiting museums and other research institutions while making phone calls to a small list of consultants. As the weeks went by, my network of potential consultants expanded and the list grew longer.

I knew I had to engage more closely with the people I wanted to study, but there were not enough opportunities then, so during the first few weeks I experienced the city alone. I would take a minibus⁵ to the city centre, allowing myself to

⁵ Minibus taxis were informal, cheap and often overcrowded vans that circulated in Cape Town. It was not clear whether, and to what extent, these taxis were regulated, but the experience was always hectic and their goal was always to fill up the van as much, as often, and as quickly as possible. Frequently when the van was full, a piece of wood, referred to as 'laptop', was placed between the aisle and window seats to accommodate extra passengers in the middle rows. Minibus drivers often took alternative routes to pick up more passengers as there were no fixed stops along the way. Competition among minibus taxis was also common. An important character in these taxis were

wander around observing the environment. I visited parks, cafes, restaurants, collected brochures, rested on benches, read the newspaper, watched buskers on the street, and on good days talked with strangers. There was nothing too exciting in what I was doing, but these first steps helped progress my adaptation nonetheless. Not surprisingly, the ‘invisible black labour’ (McDonald 2012) was everywhere. Restaurants were often coupled with upper-class white owners and lower class Black workers, who cleaned the place, cooked the food and served the clients, a reality not too far from other cities in the Global South. Sadly, the divisions that characterised apartheid are also being ‘reproduced and managed under conditions of liberal democracy’ (Samara 2011, p. 3). While much progress has been made in terms of deracialising national laws and institutions, the social, cultural and economic divide in Cape Town continues with increasing disparities between blacks, coloureds, whites and foreigners.

Clearly, the tourism industry is heavily exploited in the CBD area. Shark dives, safari trips, djembe classes and African flea markets were all being heavily advertised on the streets, yet no references to the minstrels were ever made. During my walks, I was often attracted by the sounds of drumming to the Greenmarket Square, where souvenir trade takes up a large part of the market. The place was always bright and lively with street vendors selling African masks, sculptures, Madiba shirts, bead work, and other African crafts. On one corner, standing bare-foot, a group of black African girls, some in their early teens, wearing exotic costumes and shell bracelets around their ankles sang, danced and played drums in exchange for tips, while tourists were having a good time eating, drinking and socialising on the inside closure of bars and restaurants around the square. Overshadowed by images of exotic and tribal Africa, the minstrel culture was clearly absent from the picture I was hoping to see.

I limited my walks to business hours when the commercial centre was still open and more people were on the streets. Still, I was unable to prevent frequent harassment and intimidation from street beggars in public spaces. Some relied on aggressive behaviour, holding my arm or embracing my waist to induce fear. Aggressive begging was frequent, and confrontations became specially dangerous when beggars were also drug addicts, but I was always able to wriggle my way out. Fortunately too, I was never robbed. With Ratib, the 16-year-old boy with whom I shared a house in Bo-Kaap some months later, the situation was different. On his way to school, as he was walking down Long Street, a man came up to him begging for money. He grabbed a coin from his pocket as the man quickly pulled out a knife demanding his phone. Ratib gave him the phone, and soon after returned home to the comfort of his parents. The phone was purchased two months prior to the incident and the family did not have the means to buy him

the so-called *guardtjie* (sliding door operator). He (never she, as far as I remember) would keep his head out the window chanting destinations and trying to convince people on the streets to jump in. He also collected money from passengers, arranged the seatings and used humour to keep the passengers entertained, sometimes chatting flirtatiously with women.

another one any time soon. Ratib was devastated. Optimistic, his older sister told me about her friend at work who not only had her phone stolen, but was also stabbed on the chest. Urban violence is a perennial problem in Cape Town and some of the stories I heard were hard to imagine. Yet, as in any big city, there are ways to become less vulnerable and Ratib had been careless. As his mother recalled, even the local newspaper had advised students to always walk in groups, which he had failed to do. During business hours, however, the city was always vibrant and, in general, felt a lot safer.

I knew that making meaningful connections would not happen immediately. I am therefore deeply indebted with the South African College of Music (SACM) of the University of Cape Town for granting me a visiting student card, which gave me access not only to the institution's facilities, but also to the social life at the university, where important fieldwork connections were made. After the first few weeks, I had already spoken with a good number of people about carnival and was able to conduct 7 interviews. The material collected at this stage helped me sketch a slightly better picture of what to expect, but there was still a lot missing from the picture. Research topics were still vague and many of my question unanswered.

2.1.2 *Joining the band*

As part of fieldwork grant agreements, I returned to Belfast in August and resumed fieldwork three months later. I had already established important connections in the field during the first month and was ready to join band practices. My first attempt at joining rehearsals was with the V&A Minstrels, which at the time rehearsed in Manenberg, but a gang warfare had taken place in the area. The warfare gained significant media coverage at the time and members of Hanover Minstrels advised me not to go. Following their advice, I called my gatekeeper, Mr Totah, a few days later telling him that my plans had changed. My next two options were District Six Hanover Minstrels, in Zonnebloem, and Cape Argus District Six Entertainers, in Athlone. The latter troupe was considerably larger and most of the band members were around my age group or younger. I initially tried to attend both practices but as with most troupes, they met at the same time, making it difficult to accompany more than one troupe at a time. I decided to settle with Cape Argus District Six Entertainers (D6) and tried to participate in all of its social activities, including practices, outings and fund raising events.

Established in 2005 by former members of Seawinds (Figure 2.2), D6 is one of the largest (ca. 800 members) and most competitive troupes in Cape Town (Table 3.2), pushing rivals to 'up their game' and making competitions 'tighter' every year. Distinguished from traditional troupes like Pennsylvanians, which 'stick to traditional music, traditional coon music, like the I - IV - V progression', D6 is a 'youth troupe' playing what Munsif described as 'Lady Gaga [style] tunes' (personal communication, 17/7/2014). Also, despite referencing the neighbourhood District Six, D6 is actually based in Bo-Kaap and draws its membership mostly from the Cape Flats, including Mitchells Plain, Athlone, Bridgetown and

Hanover Park. Rehearsals were held every Friday in Athlone, located to the east of the city centre on the Cape Flats, and on Sundays at their *klopskamer* in Bo-Kaap, with more days added as competitions approached. Transportation arrangements were always carefully planned, as the majority of members relied on these lifts to show up for rehearsals.

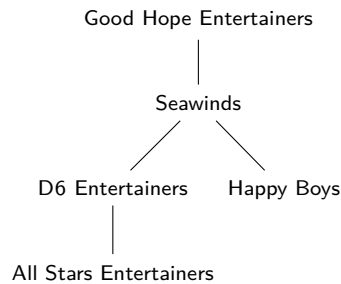


Figure 2.2: D6's genealogy and rivals

My first experience with the band was on 21 November 2014, during which I knew almost no one. I was an utter stranger to them as much as they were to me, but as the weeks went by, songs and faces became familiar, and I no longer felt as I did on the first day. Rehearsals were fun and welcoming even for strangers like me, and always stopped for Muslim prayers, usually the *Maghrib*. I was initially hoping to play one of the marching drums, but I never imposed this desire, thinking it would be more appropriate to let them decide. In the end, this decision came from the band coach, who assigned me the *gummy* drum during road marches, and drum set during competitions, two positions I honoured until the very end of the season. Overall, being a drummer was helpful in terms of overcoming cultural barriers and providing opportunities for social interaction. As Baily (2001, p. 96) writes, '[t]here can be no doubt that music making provides opportunities for a kind of participation that is generally denied to anthropologists using the methodology of participant observation'.

Joining the Cape Town Carnival

As I still had free time during working hours, I decided to roll up my sleeves and also join the Cape Town Carnival (CTC), an offshoot of a third and smaller carnival in the southern peninsula named *eMzantsi* (from isiXhosa: In the South), seeking to gain a different insight into the dynamics of both carnivals (*klopse* and CTC). From the early stages of fieldwork, it was clear that Cape Town could not be understood from the perspective of one carnival. I had to experience both, despite their differences. By November, I was already a member of one of their drumming groups, practising weekly at Zonnebloem High, in Woodstock. We also participated in occasional gigs and 'activations', which were small promotional performances held at the trendy V&A Waterfront, providing a sample of the main parade held annually in March at the Cape Town Fan Walk during a 2-week

window with the least chance of wind and rain.⁶

With floats and feathery costumes, the Cape Town Carnival resembles Rio's Sambadrome carnival, and is likewise accused of being commercially overvalued and vertically aligned. With support from private businesses and government funding, this annual street festival is marketed as a multicultural event and the longest stage in Africa (1.2 km), and despite negative reaction from researchers (see Martin 2013a; Inglese 2016; Gaulier and Martin 2017), has gained increasing popularity since its inception in 2010 as part of the FIFA World Cup. According to Sizwe, member of the organising committee, the original idea of carnival came from Naspers' chairman Koos Bekker, who saw it as an opportunity to address social challenges in the city, although as it appears the repercussion of carnival was not well received by klopse practitioners and researchers alike. For Wentzel (2011, cited in Gaulier and Martin 2017, p. 31) the CTC is 'devoid of social substratum, lacking people's participation, meant to display a particular conception of South Africa's diverse cultures for the satisfaction of tourists'. In a similar vein, Inglese (2016, pp. 277, 107–108) describes it as a 'faux carnival', 'invented by various media conglomerates as a way to create social cohesion and showcase South Africa's diversity for tourists', presenting an image of Cape Town as being 'diverse and inclusive solely for touristic purposes, while marginalizing the needs and goals of the actual resident-participants themselves'.

On the day of the festival, several performing groups from different geographic locations and socio-economic backgrounds converge. Each one of these groups joins a so-called 'academy', or a group of groups (at least two), that represents a theme/allegory, ensuring opportunities for groups to rub shoulders and engage in artistic collaboration. Each academy is also comprised of lead dancers, who are chosen for their 'lead-like qualities' to represent the academy and mediate groups within the academy. In 2015, the theme was elemental (earth, water, fire, air and space), followed by Street Life in 2016 and AMAZA! Ocean Odyssey in 2017.

Being better together. In July 2014, I met former music director of the CTC, Tyler, who was involved in monitoring and assisting several of the groups involved. As much as time and logistics allowed, I followed Tyler around and participated in some of the so-called Big Beat Team (BBT), also referred as Being Better Together. Meetings were held at the Naspers building (now Media24 Centre), a multinational internet and media group located in what has been described to me as the most expensive property area in Cape Town. Meetings were held on the 15th floor of

⁶ One consultant raised the question of why concentrate performances in rich areas, instead of where the majority of the population live, and suggests taking demographics into account and planning event locations accordingly. 'I think the CTC can do more through out the year, you know leading up to the main event, they do have the small activations but it's normally 4 or 5 girls standing up in the Waterfront, standing up with feathers you know, so people- I don't know what they really expect, and it doesn't only have to be there, it can be in our communities, it's also another thing or another issue I have with the carnival is that it's in the city, if you look at the masses don't live in the city, so I'm thinking we should take the carnival to the people instead' (Marco, personal communication, 16/4/2015).

the building furthest away from the ground, as Sizwe said, not only physically, but also ‘in some ways metaphorically, less accessible to the ordinary people’ (personal communication, 4/12/2014).

BBT is essentially a design principle to enable both group leaders and staff to conduct a more conducive meeting around assessing areas of strength and those that require improvements, creating a platform whereby participants are able to engage more actively in the planning of the event. One of the purposes of these meetings was to establish rapport and create a scaffold structure allowing participants to speak up and take more ownership of the carnival. For Linah, member of the organising committee, BBTs entail a dynamic process of transferring skills and empowering people who come from a background of subordination and are not used to having their voices heard.

Interview 2.1: There’s a lot of healing that’s gotta be done. It’s not about carnival and getting dressed (...), there’s a lot of other dynamics that gotta be healed, and in this process we are busy healing, and being able to understand that when we [Blacks] talk our voice is being heard, something is being done (Linah, personal communication, 30/4/2015).

A fantasy night. For her, carnival offers a healing channel for disempowered communities. But while members of the committee claim that children are doing better at school, jobs are being created, and Black communities are improving as a result of carnival, work begins with the assumption that communities need to be changed, prompted by reproductions of bourgeois ethos of political correctness. In the process, differences between township residents and middle-class professionals become evident. During one of my visits to Guguleto (black township), one of the staff required with some urgency the name of one of the participants who had not showed up to rehearsal. The costumes department insisted on his real name, which no one knew. His name was ‘China’, and seemingly everyone in the community knew who China was. They also required the formal address of the pickup location, which again no one knew. Instead, members of the group insisted that the address was the ‘taxi garage next to Shoprite’ (local supermarket), and that the driver knew how to find it. When after several phone calls the issue was finally resolved, we headed to a different location, still in Guguleto, where one of the Marimba Bands was supposedly practising. When we arrived, practice was overly informal, and members of the CTC soon took over rehearsal, focusing on counting beats, controlling the speed of the music and pacing of the dancers to avoid gaps between groups during the parade. With a short history, the CTC still has a long way in terms of creating a more inclusive platform for community empowerment, and their mission is not without challenges.

Interview 2.2: We need a whole lot more sponsorship to bring it on, so that we can have an equal divide between what we get and what

we share, and that is imbalanced at the moment (...) That night, it's a fantasy night. Next day we take off all of the make-up, we're back (...) They do it because everyone wants to have laughter, so they do it in the hope that one day they'll be able to laugh, but longer, and they'd happier for longer (Linah, personal communication, 30/4/2015).

For members of the organising committee, corporate interests and altruism are not on the same page, but at least now there's more awareness of what actually happens 'out there', and 'in some cases there's absolutely nothing', leaving drugs to fill the emptiness of hope and fade reality into utter oblivion. For these people, she argues, carnival is a 'make-belief', 'a fantasy night', but also an opportunity to heal, and to realise that something is being done, perhaps with 'the hope that one day they'll be able to laugh, but longer, and they'd happier for longer' (Linah, personal communication, 30/4/2015).

2.1.3 *Inside Bo-Kaap's social structure*

I continued living in Woodstock in November and moved to a student accommodation in Loop Street on the following month. Much of my time in Loop Street I spent with a group of Angolans who lived on the floor below. I felt unproductive and it was not long before I moved out. The tenement was a drug selling point and heavily infested by cockroaches. A month later, with the help of Saif, I moved to the Upper Flats in Schotschekloof, Bo-Kaap, which became my permanent address until fieldwork ended, and the closest I got to sharing intimate experiences with the klopse community. While in Bo-Kaap, I lived with two working-class Muslim families, who generously shared life stories and their experiences with the minstrel culture and beyond.

The first noticeable impression of Bo-Kaap were the coloured pastel houses in Wale Street, young boys dressed in robes and taqiyahs on their way to Muslim school and older women wearing long dresses and headscarves chatting on their balconies or leaning on their windows. On the one hand, Bo-Kaap is undergoing rapid gentrification and on the other hand, gang and drug related problems in the area are rampant. At night, young men and boys would gather on the corners to smoke *dagga* (cannabis) or meet at the Junk Yard to drink alcohol. A few metres from my window was a gambling area of the Holl Boys, the largest street gang in Bo-Kaap, many of whom lived at the *kraal*, an informal shack dwelling and hot spot a few hundred metres from where I was.

There was at least one death during my time in Bo-Kaap as a result of gang fights between the Holl Boys and the Mafias.⁷ The former gang grew as the main

⁷ There has been some speculation over the death of Adam (pseudonym), a former member of the Holl Boys, but from what I heard in the community, the Mafias were seeking revenge. The shooting occurred two days prior to a robbery carried out by the Mafias in one of the shacks in Bo-Kaap, apparently linked to the Holl Boys. A few minutes after the robbery, the shacks were put on fire, presumably by the Mafias. Aware of the timing between the robbery and the fire, members of the Holl Boys were under the impression that the rival gang had been responsible and they needed to

leaders of the Mafias were serving time in prison. As Saif told me, the problem began when members of the Holl Boys, some of whom with very high ranks, began recruiting young boys in the community, making gangsterism attractive to them. As a collective unit they became more powerful and feared in the community. For these young gangsters, it also meant excitement, access to material resources and popularity.⁸ Boys between 11 and 16 underwent initiation and had their bodies tattooed. In the words of Saif, good boys became ruthless. They knew who I was and I knew who they were, but it took me a while before I was able to establish eye contacts with them. I would exchange a few words with them from time to time, but I never had the opportunity to engage in conversations. I would see them frequently on the streets and at rugby matches where fights were common. They were loud, rowdy and also dangerous. On my way back from Hanover Park one night, a black man was severely injured and his face covered in blood. For whatever reason, the Holl Boys had just attacked the man. Some of these young gangsters in Bo-Kaap were already doing heroin and buttons (crack), but the reality on the Cape Flats, where gangsters are more heavily armed, was far worse. Sadly, this is the reality of many of those involved in klopse. As Issam said, 'there's a lot more to it than just seeing us dancing and painting our faces' (personal communication, 19/4/2015).

By February, Saif and I were close friends and I was well adapted in Bo-Kaap. I was also friends with some of *his* close friends and gradually became a part of the group. Despite the occasional slang and code switching, language was not too much of a barrier, as most of the younger generation spoke English among themselves. I was still an outsider, trying my best to make sense of the new reality, but was well accepted nonetheless and got to 'hang around' and spend quality time with them. The downside of being an outsider was perhaps offset by the fact that I was not a part of the 'colour' spectrum and not viewed as a competitor, 'white' employer, or someone with vested interest. One consultant even praised the fact that, like them, I was from the 'South' (Brazil), sharing with them a similar ethos and affinity with the problems of the 'South' (see Slobin 1992). Yet, as much as I tried to make my job clear and explain that my job was to be with them, everyone probably had their own opinions of who I was and what my intentions were. In any case, being a musician I think helped attenuate some of our differences. Frequently, we 'chilled' on the streets at night, went to rugby matches, played football in the nearby fields, improvised cooking sessions on the backyard

react. The leader of the Holl Boys then went to the Mafias' territory and threatened its leader with a gun in his mouth. Both of these gangsters had been in prison together and knew each other well. They had an argument. At night, on the next day, the Holl Boys were drinking at the Junk Yard, and on their way up towards the *kraal*, as they were crossing Rose Street, the Mafias' hit-man was sitting on the stoop wearing a yellow bib (parking marshals). He shot 4 times towards the Holl Boys and one of the bullets killed Adam on the head. The Mafias went missing for a couple of weeks after the incident, but apparently some agreement was established between the two gangs.

⁸ 'That is the weird thing, my man, you get pretty girls who actually hang around, hang out around these guys [gangsters] (...) and that's probably also more what is encouraging them, you know, to keep on doing this' (Saif, personal communication, 3/5/2015).

of the flats and attended *haddads* and other events in the community.

It was always special to attend *haddats*, as they provided close and intimate experiences with members of the community. These were small religious gatherings at private homes in the neighbourhood with distinct social demarcations of gender. Women cooked food while men gathered on the living room, singing Arabic verses in reverence to Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. The chantings (*dhikr*) were long and a bottle of water shared among those who sang helped hydrate their throats. Although clueless to what the recitations meant, and despite my limited knowledge of Arabic, repetition and melisma made it easier to 'join in' sometimes. As a call and response between soloist and choir, the chants were a mix of prayer and song with complex embellishments⁹ performed by the lead singer in the opening verses followed by the choir's response with occasional harmonies. As close as we were to the modern centre, living in Bo-Kaap was an interplay between tradition and modernity, which I was always reminded every time I rode over the cobblestone slopes of Bo-Kaap on the back of a vintage scooter dressed in a robe.

Away from the buzz of the city centre, street life in Bo-Kaap was always a unique experience. After *Maghrib* when the sun was down, friends gathered on the silent streets to watch the bright city from above and chat about *klopse* and a whole range of subjects. When it was time to meet, one would whistle on the street facing the flats, signalling that others were waiting and that it was time to meet them downstairs. They sometimes sang songs or listened to *klopse* music on their mobile phones, but *dagga* was usually the main pretext for the usual night gatherings, described by Saif as the 'weed connection'. On public holidays and special occasions, they engaged in a wide range of activities.

Leisure activities were generally frugal. On 6 April 2015, I joined Saif and others to watch *Furious 7* in one of the cinemas at the V&A Waterfront. Preparation began a few days earlier, when purchasing tickets with special discounts at a local supermarket. Schotschekloof, where we lived, was a few kilometres from the Waterfront, so we left early, picking others on our way down. It took us an hour or so walking, but as usual we carried good conversations along the way and time passed unnoticed. By the time we arrived at the Waterfront, we made a quick stop at a nearby supermarket (Pick n Pay) to purchase some snacks (candies, soft drinks and popcorn) as the ones sold at the cinema as they said were too expensive. Items were then stuffed inside purses making our banquet more discrete on our way inside.

Life in the Upper Flats was often quiet and time went by slow. At night I chat-

⁹ These embellishments are known as *karienkels*; 'the word actually denotes both a vocal technique and a tone quality, high pitched and nasal' (Desai 1983, pp. 177–178; Howard 1994, pp. 50–51 cited in Martin 2013a, p. 114). Drawing from the context of *nederlandsliedjies* (songs of Dutch origin), the *karienkel* 'is not taught, and there are no schools for the singers but the choirs themselves. It is thought to be a gift: a singer has the *karienkel* in his voice, or he does not. *Karienkels* are not extemporised, although the soloist enjoys a great amount of freedom when ornamenting a melody; he prepares his *karienkels* during practices with the choir leader and, once the passages to be embellished and the type of ornament are chosen, they do not vary in public performance' (Martin 2013a, p. 114, see also Gaulier and Martin 2017, pp. 92–95).

ted with those that worked, who would often complain about their day jobs, and during the day with those that stayed, who would often complain about not having a job. During prayer times, women stayed home while men went to Mosque, not before performing the traditional *wudu* (partial ablution), a ritual purification procedure for washing parts of the body in preparation for prayer. When loudspeakers announced, even the children on the streets stopped playing. Smoking was common, even inside the house, and many of the adults consumed medication daily – painkillers perhaps being the most common. In general, their diets were high in fat and sugar and many suffered from diabetes, fatigue and a number of other conditions associated with poor nutrition and low health. In a compelling ethnography of klopse, Inglese (2016, p. 62) observed ‘children play[ing] outside or walk[ing] in groups to the corner store to buy packets of crisps and soda, returning with liter bottles filled with florescent green and orange liquid. Several adult members smoked outside their cars, talking sports, weather, and work’. During my time in Schotschekloof, I had no broadband connection, load shedding was common and mobile signal was weak, allowing me to ‘let go of the daily email-checking habits (...) [and] the reliance on constant availability of electrical power and a phone line’ (Jorritsma 2011, p. 19), making street life a lot more attractive as a means of socialisation in the area. At the same time, street life for the most part remained unsupervised and the potential for gang affiliation and mischief was high.

2.1.4 *Post season*

Klopse season finished late February. I was still living in Bo-Kaap and actively engaged in the community, gathering with friends, playing football, going to fund raising functions, and karaokes. At least for many of us in Bo-Kaap, the klopse season was quickly replaced by the rugby season. Attending rugby matches and supporting Bo-Kaap’s local team, Schotschekloof Walmers Rugby Club (skw) was now an important part of social life. Games were often violent and sometimes involved fights between rivals. Gangs and gangsters also showed up for these games, engaging in disruptive cursing, fights and hooliganism. Smoking *dagga* on the premises of the stadium was also common. Surprisingly, however, the level of violence and rivalry increased when both teams were coloured, and decreased when a coloured team played against other ‘race’ teams.

As klopse activities faded, I took the opportunity to focus on the CTC, whose main parade on 14 March was quickly approaching. I also took the opportunity to make phone calls and arrange new interviews, but with many of them scheduled on remote areas of Cape Town, I decided to rent a car during my last two months in the field. There was also quite a lot of talking about camping on the Kramat, in Macassar, during the Easter break, which gave me an added reason to rent the car. Then, on the first weekend of April, I drove to Macassar with a few friends from Bo-Kaap, where we would meet many of our troupe colleagues for a few days.

The Sheikh Yusuf Kramat is a well-known shrine in Cape Town, and tradi-

tional pilgrimage site of the Islamic community, where much of the Cape Muslim community gather to socialise and play traditional music around campfires placed in holes dug on the ground. Carnival, however, does not appear to have a good reputation among religious organisations like the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) in Cape Town, and not surprisingly, klopse activities were latent, and replaced by the sounds of Islamic chanting and instruments. Macassar is a small fisherman town to the east of Cape Town, close to Strand and above False Bay. The shrine is located on a hill top facing the camping area with 'haunted' dunes on the left and a river on the right. Next to the camping area is an open grass field surrounded by trees, small food and clothe shops, and 'free Palestine' signs in support of the human rights of Palestinians. In front of the Mosque on the side of the field was the main stage where performances occurred, and trophies were presented.

As a tradition, campers would set their tents in the same location every year. A few tents away from where I was were members of Juvie Boys, one of our rivals in the Super League, with whom I also played music and socialised during my time at the Kramat. During the day, people played domino, prepared food, collected fire woods, and engaged with general camping chores. In the apertures between tents, some of the children running around also played with toy guns. At night, campers sat around small bonfires to protect from the cold weather and sing traditional songs with *gummies* and banjos, and later at night some of them played touch rugby matches accompanied by humorous narrations to a cheering crowd.

On the next day, myself and others were involved in a tug of war tournament, and at night, Muslim devotees performed an Islamic trance ritual, known as *ratiep*, or *ratib*. 'The *ratiep* display is uniquely characterised by the performance of self-mutilating acts by means of sharp objects to a *ratiep*-dance or movement and the rendering of vocal 'hymns' called *dhikr*' (Desai 1993, p. 175). In *ratiep* performances, subjects stab and pierce themselves with sharp objects without injuries to the sounds of Arabic chants and drums (*dhol* and *rebanna*), blurring the lines between faith and magic, where those whose spirits were clean became immune to the perforation of knives and other sharp objects. 'The purpose of a *ratiep* performance has often been characterised as a demonstration of the power of the adepts' faith or a physical demonstration of "the power of flesh over steel"' (Desai 1993, p. 456). If only as a metaphor, music becomes an antidote against violence and the sharpness of daily struggles. In the next section, I will attempt to describe some of the ways in which klopse improves community safety and well-being in the absence of effective formalised institutions.

2.2 CLEANING THE HOUSE: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Violence in Cape Town is a problem of governance, with complex socio-economic dynamics often reduced to the criminalisation of Black youth (Samara 2011). Acknowledging the systematic failure of governments in the prevention of crime, I will attempt to address strategies used by ordinary people to make themselves less



(a) Striking the body with swords



(b) Hammering a blade into the flesh

Figure 2.3: Esoteric *ratiep* performance. Photos by the author, 25 April 2015.

vulnerable. Despite ongoing efforts to bring townships back under state control, arguably in the interest of increasing services and tax payers, townships remain places of disproportional complexity and disorder. I will argue that music organisations, like brass bands and troupes, are effective means to ensure social order, cohesion and a more positive environment, by creating incentives to play, and instilling in the minds of participants a sense of unified purpose. They are bound to a common struggle through which community ties are strengthened, creating various opportunities for social interaction amid poverty and violence. For Marco, who lives in Michells Plain and works as a music instructor,

Interview 2.3: Even amongst all that, what we call chaos, people still enjoy it [klopse] because it's one of the few things that actually bring life to the communities. I mean people can be shooting in Manenberg and doing whatever and just having a band playing brings that whole peace, because music is a powerful tool, I think it's under utilised in our communities, it can bring a lot of change, man, and a lot of people [are] realising now. You will find in our schools that music is not a subject or, they don't offer it in most of our schools, talking about the public schools, so most people are realising that music is very important because it helps (hold the culture), it gives the kids an option, so they're trying to bring these programs after school, bring the marching, the music, so slowly but surely it is taking its place, yeah, but it's gonna take time (Marco, personal communication, 16/4/2015).

Collective efficacy is the theory often used to describe the means by which informal strategies are used to mitigate problems associated with violent neighbourhoods. 'It is hypothesized that collective efficacy, defined as social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good, is linked to reduced violence' (Sampson et al. 1997, p. 918). Collective efficacy is also the extent to which members of a community are able to exert social control in the absence of effective formalised institutions, maintain-

ing ‘mutual trust and solidarity among community members’ (Brown-Luthango 2015, p. 126). Informal settlements are places where individuals will often look out for one another and share resources to meet their daily necessities. What studies have shown is that neighbourhoods high in collective efficacy, in general, have lower rates of violence as a result of collective action, including neighbourhood watches, street committees and marshal systems (Seekings, Jooste, Muyeba, Coqui and Russell 2010; Brown-Luthango 2015).

A recent case study conducted in Freedom Park, a former informal settlement in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town, showed that formalisation associated with upgrading projects diminished social cohesion among members of the group (Brown-Luthango 2015). As the author explained, prior to receiving formal houses, the community was united by a common struggle, acting on the group’s behalf, sharing resources and patrolling the area. Three years later, when the settlement was upgraded with formal housing, this relationship changed dramatically, precisely as the community lost the common struggle to which they were previously bound. One consultant responded: ‘Why must I be on the streets when I can be in my house?!’ Another one said: ‘This place is very dangerous; you must be in your house always. Everyone looks after their own house, security all the time, you keep inside, because you are scared you could get shot’. For Brown-Luthango (2015, p. 133),

This apparent erosion of social cohesion among residents of Freedom Park, marked by decreasing levels of solidarity and mutual trust, has affected the community’s ability to collectively exercise control over antisocial elements in order to address violence and crime within the settlement. Before the settlement was upgraded, the community employed a variety of informal methods to combat violence and crime.

Research also suggests that ‘residential stability, a sense of attachment to place and/or a shared history of common struggle contribute to social cohesion and the maintenance of social order within a community’ (Brown-Luthango 2015, p. 134, see also Seekings and Nattrass 2008). For Brown-Luthango (2015, p. 134), ‘[h]igh levels of community violence impact on social cohesion in that it limits opportunities for social interaction and engagement between residents. This in turn inhibits collective action and social control, contributing further to violent and criminal activities within the settlement’. This does not mean that music is more important than housing, but that perhaps music can uplift communities at the micro-level in ways that more formalised methods cannot, helping to sustain communal bonds and mature autonomous spaces where needs and conflicts are perhaps more openly expressed and resolved.

To this end, klopse competitions and the sense of tradition to which consultants refer, are community responses to overcome certain vulnerabilities by means of their own efforts and solidarity. Participants will often refer to their troupe as their ‘family’ and the maintenance of these bonds are a central component of

the well-being of the individual and group, in ways that help steer emotions and important life choice trajectories. This notion of ‘family’, the troupe as a family, also evokes a sense security, mutual and economic support, sometimes as a long-lasting and unconditional relationship that prevails until death. For Seekings et al. (2010, p. 111), ‘the quality of community is the extent to which residents identify with it (and hence with one another), or feel pride in it’. What troupes do in a sense is they recreate a common struggle, through which community ties are built and sustained, making neighbourhoods less hostile and places where joy and laughter are made possible.

2.2.1 *The band as a pack*

Metaphorically, if I can put it that way, ‘one of the ways to secure night time sleep was to organize a loud evening “concert” to scare away potential predators’ (Jordanian 2011, p. 117).³¹ December 2014, Thursday afternoon in Loop Street, Cape Town. D6’s brass band was hired to perform with the Young Caballeros in Parkwood, a notoriously dangerous suburb on the Cape Flats run by the Americans, one of Cape Town’s largest and most feared street gangs.¹⁰ New Year’s Eve marks an important day in the calendar of the Malay Choir, known as *Oujaarsaand*. The tradition consists of a procession led by a *nagtroep* (night troupe) accompanied by a brass band, leading to a *tafel* (food table), during which members of the choir gather in a circle to sing traditional songs accompanied by *gummies* and banjos. I was eager not to miss the opportunity, but unfortunately the band had been reduced and some of the members whom I would usually get rides with were not going. This time I was on my own. I headed down to a busier street in search for a taxi driver who would be willing to take me to Parkwood, but Parkwood has a bad reputation and, as I expected from previous experiences, most drivers refused. Fortunately, my destination was not too far from the main highway and a driver from Congo accepted to take me.

We drove down the N2 and M5 for about twenty minutes. To my surprise, as we were approaching Parkwood, he suddenly pulled over on the side of the busy highway, and quickly disassembled the taxi sign over the car. He hopped back to his seat and explained that taxis were often targeted by gangsters in these areas. Turning his taxi into a street car was, understandably, a measure of safety. I could feel his tension and the imminent threat ahead, and I considered giving up at that point, but thought about Rashad, who I had spoken to earlier over the phone for directions. I knew Rashad well and I knew I could trust him.

As we entered Parkwood, the sun was beginning to fade and the streets were almost empty and eerily quiet. Aside from a few idle men hanging on street

¹⁰ As the title suggests, here I use the term ‘pack’ (or *pak* in Afrikaans) in reference to ‘singing pack’, the troupe’s choir in local terms, as well as wolf ‘pack’ and their protection of territory. The term *nagtroep* (night troupe) also evokes the Portuguese term *tropa de choque* (riot police), or night patrol, as a group of people patrolling a certain geographic area at night when streets are generally more dangerous.

corners, most people were inside their homes. I had visited other townships before, but this time it was different. Silence was everywhere. A few minutes into Parkwood and we reached the corner of Walmer Street, where the band was supposed to meet, but to my despair there was no one there. I probably should have been more attentive to the fact that *klopse* gatherings ‘run on *klopse*-time’ and rarely start on time (Mason 2010b, p. 17). In any case, I knew the driver was wanting to flee the area but convinced him to wait a little longer. Gazing with some suspicion, he slowly parked the car close to a small open shop on the corner. Incidentally, he never turned the engine off. Five minutes or so later, I spotted a few men wearing grey tracksuits with big red YC initials stamped on their chest. The first members of Young Caballeros had finally arrived. I knew no one, but took the opportunity to approach them and introduce myself. Jasiem, one of the singers, promptly turned to the driver on the other side of the road telling him that I was safe with them and that he could go. I thanked and paid the driver, who quickly made his way back to the highway.

As time passed, local residents and members of the *nagtroep* were beginning to grow in numbers, but it was not until the band arrived that I was able to relax. As the musicians began assembling their instruments, the intermittent sounds of music that gradually filled the emptiness of that street, were slowly changing the landscape of the township, harnessing the environment and forging a sense of security. In fact, never had I felt so much relief from hearing a brass band as I had that day. The buzz was inviting and people were gradually leaving their homes, putting an end to the fear I had felt some minutes before. The sounds of brass and drums felt like a bullet proof shield. It felt as if the army had just arrived, and the relationship I had initially established with Parkwood all of a sudden began to change. I felt safe, perhaps even more so than I would in the city centre at that time. The residents were smiling, chatting with one another and slowly gathering on the sidewalk as the buzz before the procession was getting louder.

Some curious kids were eager to interact with the musicians, and I could already see the joy in their eyes. I began taking pictures soon after the bus arrived, trying to register the different stages of the procession. Some of the young boys were posing for the camera while making intricate hand signs, which I later learned were referencing gangs, perhaps those in their own backyard. Revisiting field notes and pictures of this day, I realised just how important music is in restoring safety in some of these areas, if only for a short while. In the absence of effective police patrolling in poorer neighbourhoods, and as an important locus and stimulus of socialisation and civic engagement, music provides communal acoustic networks helping to uplift communities and protect its members. In a sense, violence ceases when music steps in, inhibited by it, and resumes, perhaps with less fierce, when it steps out. ‘More than any other medium, music is the means by which groups represent and signal their collectivity; music is the acoustic projection of their size, unity, and power’ (Averill 1994, p. 243).



(a) Emptiness, silence and fear



(b) Band arrives



(c) Residents leave their houses



(d) Liveliness, sound and safety

Figure 2.4: *Nagtroep* performing in Parkwood, a notoriously dangerous suburb on the Cape Flats run by the Americans, one of Cape Town's largest and most feared street gangs. Photos by the author, 31 December 2014.

2.2.2 *Collective efficacy*

In Section 2.2.1, I presented an ethnography of the brass band in Parkwood, a notoriously dangerous township in Cape Town. The aim was to demonstrate the role of musicians in reshaping violent neighbourhoods by themselves and in their own ways. In this section, I will discuss the significance of local music activities in sustaining collective efficacy and joint projects with the local police, drawing from my experience with Young Sunrise Brass Band (YSBB), a music organisation located in Bridgetown, Athlone, acting as a small germ of NGOs like AfroReggae in Brazil. In the context of klopse and brass bands, band masters are often described as social workers, keeping vulnerable youth busy with music and away from mischief. Surprisingly, when a young bandsman is caught in mischief, police officers will often approach the band master first before approaching his parents. Bands provide important life skills and civic awareness, helping to regulate antisocial behaviour and overcome certain vulnerabilities. From what I was able to observe, recognition plays a key role in acknowledging achievements and merits as citizens, or citizen musicians.

Interview 2.4: I give them recognition for what they are doing, meaning I choose children that I know, 'oK, I know you are one of the naughty

ones, but I see there's a change in you', so with the police we look at these matters and say 'listen, let's give the child a ()', meaning if it's a trophy or a certificate just for what he has done, in recognition of what he has done through music (Joel, personal communication, 28/4/2015).

The local media also plays an important role by giving musicians further exposure on the Athlone News, a community newspaper freely distributed to all houses in the neighbourhood. As a result of this exposure, the community keeps a closer eye in the kids. This extra communal supervision, in turn, makes them less vulnerable. Under the broader aegis of the community, as Joel told me, kids will think twice before engaging in delinquency. He went on to explain that 'people might not know the child, but they will see in the newspaper that this child's life has been turned around. He's starting a new [chapter] in his life by choosing music, and some of them make it' (Joel, personal communication, 28/4/2015).

Joel keeps a stack of newspaper articles, photographs and a number of other personal archives, which clearly blurs the lines between music and social work. In one of these articles, entitled 'Men of honour', a group of men (band master included) are proudly holding certificates at Vangate Mall for their contributions toward the eradication of violence against women and children and for the positive role they play in their community. As I delved deeper into his personal archive, I noticed that music certificates were also signed by the Athlone South African Police Service (SAPS) Station Commissioner, and some of the events at which the band performed were directly linked to the local police. One of these events was called 'Men against violence'. This close relationship between the band, the Athlone police and Bridgetown's Civic Association is a form of collective action. Under the guidance of police inspectors, band members will engage in cleanup operations to chop down trees in drug and gang infested areas (Figure 2.5). Much of these activities are not exposed beyond the scope of the community, but clearly indicate the contribution of music in sustaining collective efficacy. As Jacob said, 'put an instrument in the kid's hand rather than a knife or a gun; you can't hold them both' (personal communication, 23/4/2015).

The *klopskamer* is a safe and welcoming place for group members to socialise. According to Marco, 'there's not much happening [on the Cape Flats], so it's the coons mainly, they're open everyday, we call it the *klopskamer*, it's like the band room, so it's open I mean if you are done with your homework what do you do? So you go there, you go play with other people' (personal communication, 16/4/2015). For members of the CTC, the situation in the black townships is similar, especially for those living on the bread line, who find shelter in shipping containers or unused police halls to dance and play music. Linah, who works for the CTC, argues that carnival is the 'icing on the cake', a 'fantasy night', and on the next day, when masks and makeups are off, 'what's left?'. For her, carnival is part of a healing process with success stories as a result of the 6 months preparing for carnival. It is something they look forward to, raising their enthusiasm, and increasing the sum

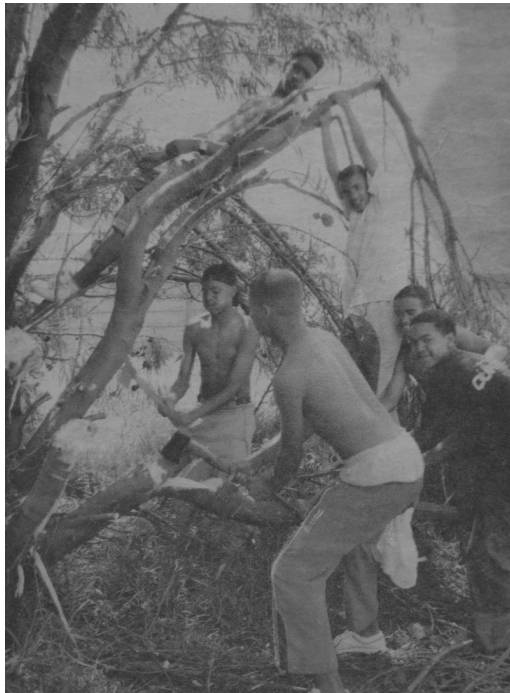


Figure 2.5: Bandsmen chopping trees in gang infested area. *Newspaper clipping, ca. 2007.*

of good in the community. 'From what I've seen from the communities', she says,

Interview 2.5: there's a need to be recognised, a need to be heard, a need to be seen, because for so long I'm being oppressed. You get tired of sitting in the dark, sometimes even if it's a twinkle of light it's fine, it's good. It's a ray, just a little ray of light, it's fine, () smile and be happy, so there are many things, and thank you because I'm realising just how deep, because only when you started you open up that lid and you feel safe, then you go, that's why I was asking you, because I think I knew in my spirit, it was a lot more than what I normally say. (...) I think it's the truth. I'd like it to be the truth and it's a glimmer of hope, in a nut shell if you want to put this in one little line 'it's a glimmer of hope for the normally oppressed' (Linah, personal communication, 30/4/2015).

Under existing circumstances and through empirical observation, an attempt was made to explain the legacy of klopse music as symptoms of deeper divisions rather than historical imperatives, in which people turn to themselves and the group for solutions and prospects. As members of the group, individuals become stronger and more resourceful in avoiding the traps of their own fate and failures, which they themselves were not at fault. Through music and dance, participants learn about themselves, their struggles and needs and responsibilities towards each other, and articulate their existence as members of a group, against resignation, summoning opportunities for joy outside the social and economic mainstream. Next I will discuss the ways in which systemic divisions still dictate conditions of

failure among those occupying the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

2.3.1 *Problems of governance and inequality*

There are many reasons to study Cape Town, the oldest city in South Africa, also referred as the 'Mother City'. Most importantly, perhaps, Cape Town is likely *the most* unequal city in the world (McDonald 2012). According to the World Bank, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world in terms of income distribution, with a legacy of social and economic polarisation, much of which is still highly correlated with race and socio-spatial inequalities (Seekings 2007). Although significant improvements have been made in terms of poverty reduction, inequality rates in South Africa have actually *risen* over the post-apartheid period despite economic growth, marked by a 'rapid adjustment to neoliberal policies' (McDonald 2012, xviii-xix). This is because an increased share of income has moved to the top ten percent. Social grants have also become much more important as sources of income in the lower segment (Leibbrandt et al. 2012, p. 19).

With 'an overall injury death rate of 157.8 per 100 000 population', nearly twice the average worldwide, and murder rates close to five times the global average (Seedat, Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla and Ratele 2009, p. 1011), South Africa is amongst the most violent countries in the world. In many developed countries in Western Europe and elsewhere, homicide rates are less than 2 people per 100 000 people. In developing countries like Chile, India, and Nigeria, the average ranges between 3 to 20 people per 100 000 people. In South Africa the average is 41 people per 100 000 people, close to fifty murders daily in 2006 (Kaminer and Eagle 2010, p. 14). The numbers are even worse among young men '(184 per 100 000) and in some areas, for instance in Cape Town's townships, rates are more than twice this number' (Seedat et al. 2009, p. 1012). With limited resource distribution and scarce employment opportunities, many recourse to crime and other illegal modes of production and livelihood. But despite unprecedented murder rates, South Africa is a major tourist destination and a wonderland for those who can afford it. Under increasing economic disparities, and higher concentrations of violence within township areas, what role does klopse play by and for those lacking the opportunity to exercise civic rights, and whose access to space and resources remain limited? Can troupe membership prevent gang affiliation, and can it protect members of the group and reduce their risk?

With staggering murder rates concentrated on poor neighbourhoods, security problems faced by low-income populations, particularly on the Cape Flats, are worrying. Historically, the social dislocation of Blacks during apartheid nurtured conditions for the proliferation and intensification of crimes, in particular those related to gang activities. Breadwinners were forced to commute long distances to work leaving their children unsupervised for longer hours. Not surprisingly, much of these problems continue as a result of neoliberal policies aimed at attracting

capital, foreign investors, tourism and property industries, allocating much of the city's resources to the rich minority. Cape Town's mansions running along the coastline of the Atlantic Seaboard, as I have seen, are hard to imagine.

Inequality in post-apartheid South Africa is often attributed to an increase in taxes and the minimum wage, causing many businesses to move overseas, making unemployment worse and criminal activities a viable option for the unemployed. Alongside endemic corruption, unemployment in the new political economy makes it easier for employers to dictate work conditions. Furthermore, with the socio-spatial legacy of apartheid (Figure 2.6), recent efforts to turn Cape Town into a world city have to a large extent succeeded, with a high-tech urban core on one side and a low-income periphery on the other. Influenced by racial capitalism and neoliberal policies, urban violence is one among many problems experienced by Cape Town's poor. Indeed, never had I encountered so many bodily scars as a result of physical assaults as I did in Cape Town. 'Coloureds are dangerous', explained a musician from Nigeria, 'they stab'. Gun shots, broken bottles, bar fights, robberies, stabbings and so on are all too common. Later in this chapter, I will provide some ethnographic discussion on the relationship between music and violence, focusing on the ways in which music making helps regulate antisocial behaviour in the communities.

2.3.2 *'Post'-apartheid city*

Cape Town remains largely divided along socio-economic lines (Figure 2.6), much of which drawn from the preceding decades of apartheid. For Seekings and Nattrass (2008, p. 301), inequality in the post-apartheid city 'remain[s] as high as ever, if not higher, even if interracial differentials declined'. Fundamentally, those who were poor during apartheid now continue to struggle to escape subservience, and many of the unskilled labour force remains unemployed. Economic obstacles and gentrification are perhaps the main reason for the persistence of segregation, as housing and land prices in the formerly white areas have continued to inflate. Marked by rigid class demarcations, 'the "post-apartheid" city should perhaps be viewed as a "neo-apartheid" city, with electric fences and barricades protecting rich areas, and the overwhelming majority of people living in mono-racial areas' (Seekings and Nattrass 2008, p. 9).

On top of income distribution, the current landscape is also shaped by unequal levels of education, through which wealthier and more educated households have been able to retain better paying jobs and control most of the country's economy and land. Conversely, those who had limited access to education during apartheid (non-whites in particular) continue to receive lower incomes and, as a result, are unable to afford high-quality schools for their children. Thus, in the aftermath of unequal access to good education, low-income households become less competitive in the labour market, reflecting what Galtung (1969) describes as structural violence. That is, those who are unable to afford the high costs of property taxes in the affluent areas are pushed to the peripheries where opportunities and resources

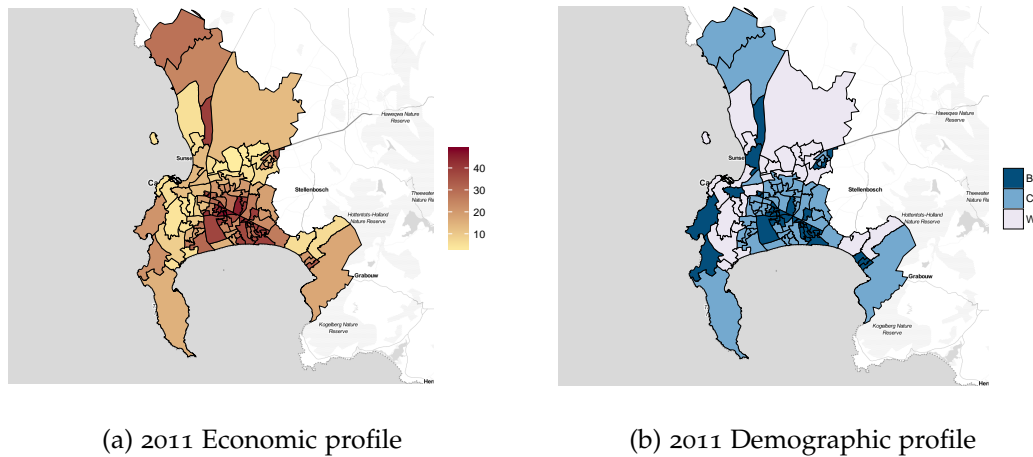


Figure 2.6: Map of the ‘post’-apartheid city. Both maps use data from the latest Census in South Africa (2011). This is currently the most comprehensive source of socioeconomic and demographic information for city-wide and local level analysis in Cape Town (SDI 2012). The map on the left distinguishes wards according to unemployment rates (%), with higher rates represented by darker colours. Unemployment rate refers to the percentage proportion of unemployed labour force. The map on the right distinguishes wards according to the predominant population group living in those areas, namely blacks (B), coloureds (C) and whites (W). This gives a general idea of the urban landscape in terms of class and racial composition. Some areas, like Delft and Zonnebloem, are more mixed than others, but the overall comparison provides some insight into how the post-apartheid city looks presently in terms of socio-spatial inequalities, economic status and segregation. To the southeast of the CBD and above False Bay is the Cape Flats, with impoverished and crowded black Africans living on the centre (see Figure 1.1b). Data source: SDI (2012).

are scarce. Not surprisingly, with lower infrastructure, marginalised areas suffer more from higher rates of premature death, preventable health problems and other forms of indirect violence. Moreover, as a result of the low-lying and sandy terrain of the Cape Flats, flooding in the area during winter is a perennial problem, aggravated by increasing rubbish and absence of basic services in some areas, spreading diseases and making vulnerable children sick (Dixon and Ramutsindela 2006). The problem therefore calls for urgent environmental justice and concrete steps towards better spatial distribution of environmental goods, free of prejudice, amongst all Cape Town residents. Next, I will attempt to situate klopse within the context of urban violence, and demonstrate how troupes are responding to problems of urban governance, and bringing joy in spite of the fragility of its environment.

2.3.3 *Mediation between crime and joy*

Over the last decades, music and violence, and more recently music and peace building (Urbain 2015), have been a subject of interest in the anthropological and sociological studies of music. Here I explore the relationship between troupes’ headquarters and crime rates in Cape Town using statistical data from the South African Police Service (SAPS) and preliminary data on carnival troupes in Cape

Town. Figure 2.7a shows that the majority of troupes concentrate on the Cape Flats (see Figure 1.1b), mainly in the vicinity of Heideveld, Bonteheuwel and Lentegeur, also covering parts of the City Bowl and Northern Suburbs. Using aggregate data from 2015 to 2016, Figure 2.7b indicates the geographic coordinates of the 15 precincts with the highest murder rates, of which at least 7 are historically coloured areas. The comparison is suggestive. It shows that the epicentre of both figures are almost identical, and that troupe membership is perhaps more deeply entrenched in the social fabric of violent neighbourhoods, perhaps as a coping strategy employed by those living under the hot spots and furthest from the social and economic opportunities in the more developed areas of the city.¹¹

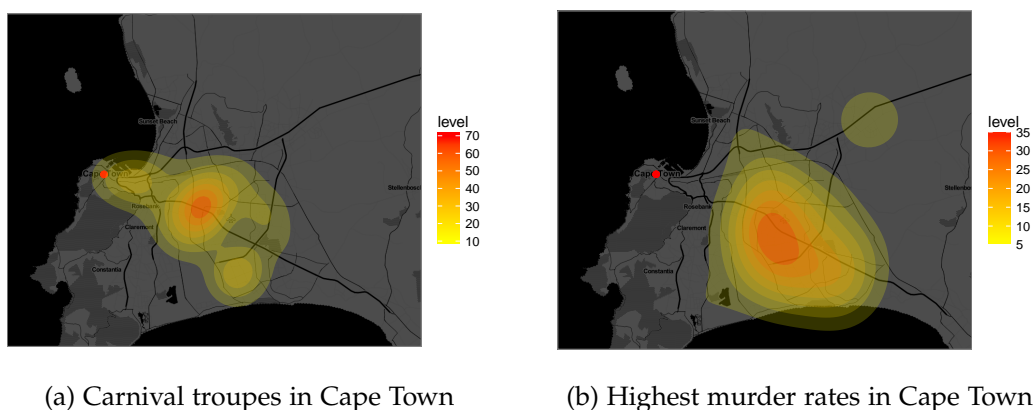


Figure 2.7: Music in the crossfire. The heat map on the left represents troupes' headquarters, and on the right, the highest murder rates in Cape Town. A comparison of both maps shows that the majority of troupes concentrate either on or close to the precincts with the highest murder rates in the city. The analysis is a first step forward at making this comparison, but there are still troupes missing from the data, and others I have not included, of which at least one has been able to thrive outside of the Board's cartel, namely Delta Valley Entertainers, in Franschhoek, funded by Solms-Delta wine estate. I have also not included troupes under the Wellington Minstrel Board and the Drakenstein Coon Carnival Association in Wellington or other troupes outside of Cape Town's municipal boundaries. A much smaller Board named Cape District Association, whose 8 troupes compete at Florida Park in Ravensmead, was also not included.

There are presently 40 troupes under the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association (CTMCA) Board competing at the Athlone Stadium, in Athlone, of which the majority concentrate on the Cape Flats, mainly Lentegeur, Mitchells Plain and Heideveld, as well as Bo-Kaap. As for the Kaapse Klopse Karnival Association (KKKA) Board, there are presently 21 troupes competing at Vygieskraal Stadium (now at the Cape Town Stadium), among which Bonteheuwel, Heideveld and Delft have the highest concentration of troupe headquarters. Crime in Cape Town,

¹¹ There are also drawbacks to klopse as far as violence. 'Normally', according to Joel, 'when these gangs see your trope operating within the area where you are, they will come there and see if there isn't one of the rival gangs between the troupe members and if there is, they will shoot and, you know, a bullet doesn't have a name on it' (Joel, personal communication, 28/4/2015). He went on to mention stabbings at stadiums as a result of gang warfare, perhaps also linked to an increase in alcohol and drug consumption.

however, is far more complex. The SAPS, for instance, distinguishes a total of 17 community-reported serious crimes under which murder is just one among other types of crimes which I have not included in the analysis. Also, a headquarters, known as *klopskamer*, is simply the troupe's home base, or the place where troupe members will gather, eat and practice. This means that while members may reside in the same area of their troupe's headquarters, this is not always the case. But despite the absence of official statistical data on *klopse*, there is strong evidence that most members reside on the Cape Flats, on or close to the light blue area shown in Figure 2.6b.

Another important fact is that, although murder rates in Cape Town are among the highest in the world, the precincts on which crimes generally occur are situated on the poorer side of the city, making Cape Town's poor by far the most affected. In the more affluent neighbourhoods, like Sea Point and Camps Bay on the Atlantic Seaboard on the left side of the map, annual murder rates are either zero or close to zero, suggesting that South Africa is not equally dangerous for everyone, and that 'some people are more at risk than others of experiencing certain kinds of trauma' (Kaminer and Eagle 2010, p. 9). What governments and media often portray is 'the emergence of a war on crime, and the criminalization of black youth in postapartheid Cape Town' (Samara 2011, p. 7). But in reality, much of what is happening are problems of governance, linked to a broader 'tendency to reduce complex and multidimensional socio-economic challenges of global significance to very conventional security challenges' (Samara 2011, p. 8).

To understand how violence unfolds under conditions of inequality, it is important to understand the underlying differences between direct and structural violence, or as Galtung (1969) puts, '*the difference between the potential and the actual*'. In other words, violence is present not only as a result of direct violence, but also when it is avoidable. Put simply, 'if a person died from tuberculosis in the eighteenth century it would be hard to conceive of this as violence since it might have been quite unavoidable, but if he dies from it today, despite all the medical resources in the world, then violence is present according to our definition' (Galtung 1969, p. 168). Another salient point is that violent cultures are often rooted within structures of higher social inequality, hindering conditions for peace and social justice, which means that, in theory, those whose needs are not met are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour.

* * *

This chapter focused on my observations of the field and experiences as a participant observer, examining the role of the *Kaapse Klopse* in the mitigation of physical and emotional distress, and in positioning individuals against an environment of social and political degradation. The aim was to understand the bridges connecting music, urban violence and environmental injustice, 'open[ing] new perspectives for a stronger participation of organizations of the civil society in the field of public

safety and for cooperation projects with the police' (Ramos 2006, p. 420). More specifically, I argued that troupes provide important channels to vent negative emotions, forging a sense of security and community, and 'seducing [young men and women] with the *glamour* of the arts, visibility and success' (Ramos 2006, p. 422). Through micropolitics, these musical initiatives in the townships have become powerful means of mobilising the civil society in responding to urban violence, resonating across the Atlantic with Brazilian NGOs like the AfroReggae, Olodum, Timbalada, and others, which also 'seek to produce alternative images to the stereotypes of criminality' (Ramos 2006, p. 422). In the next chapter, I will examine the functions and characteristics of klopse competitions, their intersection with broader patterns of social and economic formation, and motives for why troupes engage in competition.

3 *Why troupes compete*

Junior Best Band. It's Carls's big moment to stand up with his trumpet and impress the judges. I grab my sticks, drum throne and cymbal stand as we hurry across the tunnel towards the stage. I am quick to assemble the kit squinting against the bright reflectors for a glimpse at the huge wall of people ahead. I turn to Carl once again, who is sitting to my right flickering his fingers gently over the valves against the roaring sounds of the crowd.

Klopse competitions exist for a very long time as a medium of socialisation among Cape Town's mixed-race community. Since the very first formalised competition in 1907 at the Green Point Track, carnival troupes compete against each other for prizes, profit, status, and bragging rights, allocating much of the community's energy, time, and resource into the maintenance of these performances. In this chapter, I will explore the functions and characteristics of carnival competitions, focusing on how and why troupe members engage in competition, and propose that broader socio-political struggles are deeply entrenched in the reasons why and ways in which participants organise themselves musically. I will also argue that competitions function to maximise enjoyment, participation, and other social aims, providing cheap entertainment for those whose access to the social and economic mainstream are limited, as well as opportunities to create exchange tokens, social and psychological order. Even under conditions where no money is made or expected to be made from the game, joy, status, self-confidence, and similar rewards are generally enough to create positive reinforcement and motivate participants to engage in competitions. Only when their chances and hopes for rewards are low, do they reconsider the investment and their participation. The chapter begins with an overview of the structure of the game, followed by a theoretical framework leading to an ethnographic discussion of the internal dynamics of the game.

3.1 TOURNAMENT DESIGN

Organised under Carnival Boards, klopse competitions fall under a self-organised rank-order tournament scheme, in which troupes gather for 17 specific contests. Troupe competitions are one of the highlights of *Tweede Nuwe Jaar*, although largely concealed from tourists and the outside community. As with other tournament

systems, klopse is designed to keep the community engaged, ranking and rewarding the best teams, and providing opportunities for participants to show-off their skills, develop new ones, engage in match and post-match discussions, and measure themselves against others. Competitions are also designed to promote social interaction and cooperation, in which in-group participants work together in order to outdo rival troupes, although ‘it is [also] possible that the people within these groups can be vying for money or status’ (Kohn 1992, p. 5). The two main rival Boards in Cape Town are currently the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association (CTMCA) and the Kaapse Klopse Karnival Association (KKKA), each competing on separate stadiums, Athlone and Vygieskraal (now Cape Town Stadium), respectively. The former Board is run by Richard ‘Pot’ Stemmet and Kevin Momberg, and the latter by Melvyn Matthews (now Dennis Petersen). The KKKA is sometimes referred to as the ‘rebel Board’, as ‘they don’t want to play under the Stemmet ruling’ (Issam, personal communication, 19/4/2015). Also, according to Gaulier and Martin (2017, p. 11), ‘[r]ivalry between these two organisations is intense, the more so since the management of public funds allocated for running the New Year Carnival has become a crucial issue’. Each Board is composed of a chairperson and two representatives from each club, granting each troupe two votes when decisions are called. Each Board comprises three leagues, each containing several competing troupes of similar skill level and size, ranging from 200 to 1500 members (Figure 3.1). Performances are then judged by a panel of 6 to 8 adjudicators (see Figure 3.2), spanning over several weeks of competition.

Teams are divided into leagues within each Board, and grouped with teams that share similar qualities and characteristics. The larger and more competitive teams compete in the Super League, followed by the Premium League and First Division, respectively. This means that there are always three champions in each Board, and a total of 15 troupes ranked as top five in their respective leagues. Lifting the trophy as champions of the Super League, however, carries the most prestige and lower level teams strive to make their way up. A troupe follows roughly a three-tier pyramid structure, with troupe owners on top, followed by an executive and working committee in the middle, including directors, coaches, and captains, followed by musicians, dancers, and troupe members in general, also known as *soldate* (soldiers), in the base of the pyramid holding the majority of participants within the troupe. Musicians fall roughly under 2 categories: Those who are paid and those who are not. Paid musicians are either hired as independent artists, usually singers, to perform on competitions or as service providers, which is often the case of brass bands, hired to rehearse and perform during the entire season. Non-paid musicians are usually referred to as the core members of the troupe. They expect no compensation and are driven by their love for the team and the sport. Depending on the size and budget of the team, the troupe owner might also hire additional bands to rehearse and perform during the season, making the band a mixture of in-troupe and out-troupe bands that meet for music practices and performances spanning several months. Junior and senior drum majors are also

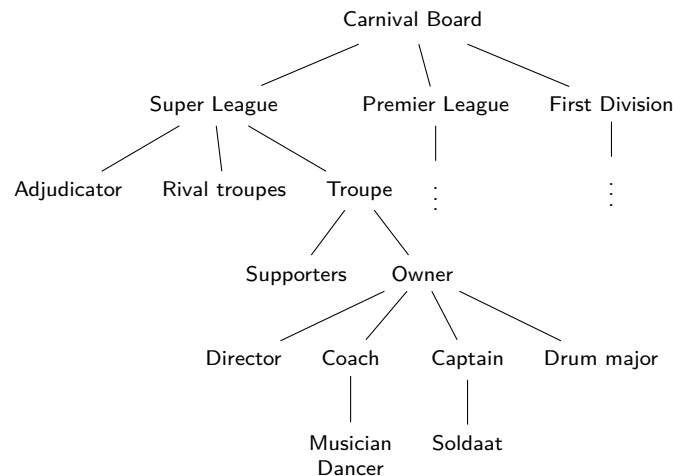


Figure 3.1: Carnival Board and competition structure. A Board is composed of a chairperson and two representatives from each club, granting each troupe two votes when decisions are called. Each Board comprises three leagues, each containing several competing troupes of similar skill level and size, ranging from 200 to 1500 members. At the top is the Super League, followed by Premier League and First Division, respectively. Performances are judged by a panel of 6 to 8 adjudicators (see Figure 3.2). Roughly, a troupe follows a three-tier pyramid structure with troupe owners on top, followed by an executive and working committee in the middle, including directors, coaches, and captains, followed by ordinary members, known as *soldate* (soldiers), in the base of the pyramid holding the majority of participants within the troupe.

a part of the troupe, and play an important role leading the entourage during parades, and as solo dancers during competitions.

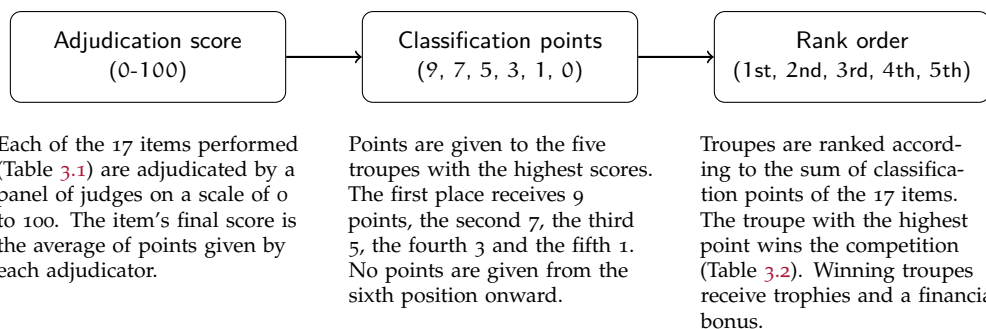


Figure 3.2: Pointing system

At least in Athlone, the money collected from gate fees (tickets) paid by spectators and supporters during several weeks of competition is divided among all participating troupes, with added bonuses relative to the rank position paid to the top three troupes. Prestige is conferred to the winning troupes through achieved status, although adjudication results are always firmly contested (the Afrikaans term *betaal* is sometimes used to describe bribing the judges). For each of the 17 items adjudicated (Table 3.1), the troupe with the highest score becomes first in

the rank, and receives 9 points, the maximum number allowed; the troupe with the second highest score becomes second in the rank, and receives 7 points. This succession continues until the fifth position. No points are given from the sixth position onward (Figure 3.2). The highest average from the total number of points of every item determines the carnival champion (Table 3.2).

Table 3.1: D6 competition points and score

Items	Score	Position	Points
English Combined	91.33	1	9
Afrikaans Combined	76.66	1	9
English Comic	71.66	4	3
Afrikaans Comic			0
Junior Choir			0
Group Song	90.5	3	5
Junior Best Band	87.5	4	3
Senior Best Band	91.5	2	7
Minstrel Song			0
Juvenile Sentimental	90.33	2	7
Adult Sentimental			0
Junior Drum Major	74.5	5	1
Senior Drum Major			0
Grand March Past	96.16	1	9
Exhibition	86.66	4	3
Best Dress	80.5	5	1
Best Board	100	1	9
Total			73

Note: Adapted from *Daily Voice*, by M. Botha, 19/2/2015, p. 11.

Every item falls roughly under 4 main categories: choir, band, solo, and troupe. All choir performances are backed by a backing track, although there are certain restrictions over what backing tracks are allowed to include. The senior choir performs 5 of the 17 items, of which two (English Comic and Afrikaans Comic) are accompanied by a solo singer. Comic songs, also called *moppies*, are theatrical performances with choreography, fast klopse rhythm, and satirical lyrics sung by a soloist and backed by the choir. The other 3 are the English Combined Chorus, Afrikaans Combined Chorus, and Group Song, all of which are sung in four-part harmony with differences in style and language. As the highlight of competition, the Group Song focuses on innovation, gimmicks, choreography and popular song medleys. The Junior Choir performs one item, perhaps as a point of entry and preparation for the more advanced senior choir. Under the solo category are 5 items, of which 3 are solo singing: the Minstrel Song, which is generally a swing or ragtime-style song similar to American blackface minstrelsy, as well as the Adult Sentimental, and Junior Sentimental, both of which are slow, popular, and love songs. The last two solo items are the Senior Drum Major and the Junior Drum

Major, both of whom are judged on the quality of their dances. Under the band category are the Senior Best Band and the Junior Best Band, judged on the quality of the brass band. The last 4 items fall under the troupe category, including the (1) Grand March Past, a military-style parade, (2) Exhibition, similar to American Football's Half Time Show, (3) Best Dress, and (4) Best Board, an artistic emblem of the troupe displayed on the field as a scale model.

Table 3.2: Super League results

Troupe	Headquarters	Points	Rank
Shoprite Pennsylvanians	Hanover Park	90	1
District Six Entertainers	Bo-Kaap	73	2
Juvie Boys Entertainers	Mitchells Plain	60	3
Ashwin Willemse Orient	Sherwood Park	51	4
Heideveld Entertainers	Heideveld	47	5

Note: Adapted from *Daily Voice*, by M. Botha, 19/2/2015, p. 11.

3.2 FUNCTIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPETITION

Despite the growing body of literature on sports contests, music competition literature still lags a far deal behind.¹ To contribute to existing discussions, I will outline general contest theories as guiding tenets for understanding troupe competitions.

3.2.1 *Playing success and post-match discussions*

Theoretical presuppositions of sports contests, in particular those taking place in a league- and team-based competition, serve as a set of principles that help explain the nature of competitions, the reward structure, ordinal ranks, and the incentives behind tournament design. From a sporting view point,

tournament [or contest] theory can indicate how hard a contestant is likely to work relative to their opponents, which adds to the potential for their success and the overall quality of the competition as this effort is balanced against opponents. It also highlights that this process entails an economic trade-off between the competitor, the agent, who needs to be enticed to take part in the contest, and the principal or organizer of the contest, who is seeking an economic return from organizing the activity, but who needs to employ the competing agents. (Downward et al. 2009, p. 186).

¹ Some of the more notable exceptions are the books *Mashindano! Competitive music performance in East Africa* (Gunderson and Barz 2000) and *The Kalela dance: Aspects of social relationships among urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia* (Mitchell 1959). I would also include the book *In township tonight! South Africa's black city music and theatre* (Coplan 1985), the works of McCormick (2009, 2014, 2015) on the sociology of classical music competition, and the growing literature on reality TV singing competitions (for example, Raykoff and Tobin 2007; Meizel 2011; de Bruin and Zwaan 2016).



Figure 3.3: Group Song warm up at the dressing room area before competition at the Athlone Stadium. Photo by the author, 7 February 2015.

Another premise of sporting competitions is that the effort invested by contestants is relative to that of the opponents, and that the greater the effort, the greater the value of competition, in turn increasing the potential for economic and psychic income rewards (Szymanski 2003). Successful competitions also require a balanced league, one in which the chances of winning are the least predictable. In other words, the quality of competition increases when ability differences among opponents are roughly the same, in which case the incentive to win is more likely to maximise efforts from the contestants, as well as the quality and value of competition.

As in sports and klopse, rewards and bonuses are a common strategy to entice players and maximise their efforts, not just among players of the dominant team, 'but also to encourage efforts to attack even if the team is losing' (Downward et al. 2009, p. 192). But while higher salaries can attract better players and coaches, successful troupes also rely on the commitment of its core members, those who are in it for the 'love of the game'. They usually have a long-term relationship with the troupe, and it is often they along with supporters who will publicise the team and help bring new members in. In general, the quality of the event raises when contestants are struggling the hardest to outdo their opponents, as well as when differences in skill are small and the results uncertain. It is no surprise that carnival Boards are split into three separate leagues, grouping troupes of similar qualities and characteristics, and handicapping strong contestants. The fact that troupes perform different songs also adds to the uncertainty of outcome, although arguably it makes adjudication less objective. Different from the typical win/lose schema, however, in which one person's success depends on the failure of others, troupe and sports competitions, require some level of cooperation and some distribution of power in order to generate and distribute profits.

Another important aspect of tournaments is the notion of interdependence, which aims to preserve the equality of participants, contrary to most other affairs under capitalist norms. That is, Carnival Boards are composed of team representatives who collaborate in decision-making processes, functioning as cartels to hedge the interests of the league and ensure that even weaker teams are able to thrive and

benefit from their participation, while at the same time entrusting too much power to carnival leaders with a low threshold for reaching consensus. There are, too, other incentives to making competitions successful. In the context of professional European football, Sloane (1971) acknowledges competitions as a public good in which the objective is to maximise utility and playing success. Even when directors and shareholders are profiting,

It is quite apparent that directors and shareholders invest money in football clubs not because of expectations of pecuniary income but for such psychological reasons as the urge for power, the desire for prestige, the propensity to group identification and the related feeling of group loyalty (Sloane 1971, p. 134).

These and other psychological factors would thus contribute to the incentive design of competition that keeps players, staff, and the community involved. If true, then troupe ownership should equate to consumption rather than investment opportunities, although a minimum level of profit is also required to avoid financial conflicts. For troupe owners, committee and members, the goal in maximising utility is to increase the performance of the team, the average attendance of spectators, and the balance of the team when a minimum acceptable level of profit is ensured. Also, even if troupes are striving to outdo their rivals, they are also seeking to protect the interests of the alliance.

Notwithstanding conflicting interests, clubs will often seek to maximise utility and playing success, while at the same time providing entertainment and other services that benefits the supporting community. Sports economic theory also holds that ‘the more asymmetrical the distribution of power the greater the need for the central body to redistribute resources’ (Sloane 1971, p. 130), suggesting that because of rules, tournaments tend to safeguard fairness and shy away injustices. That is, even in the case of *klopse*, ‘entering a competition implies agreeing on a set of common rules according to which performances will be adjudicated: competitors participate in the preservation and promotion of an agreement to coexist peacefully’ (Martin 2013a, p. 20). Likewise, Schwery and Cade (2009, pp. 472–473) suggest that competitions encourage participants ‘to channel malignant aggression into some form of productive communication in order to resolve them without resorting to violence’, and that ‘[e]ven when conflicting parties are not prepared to sit down together and talk, it is sometimes possible to bring them together through sport’. Here the author is making the distinction between benign and malignant aggression, in which the former refers to achieving sporting goals, whereas the latter refers to the intention to injure, which the rules of the game are always ready to punish. There is, however, in the case of *klopse* and others like it, also ways of exploiting ‘holes’ in the game. In theory, not always in practice, competitions are distinguished by ‘relative superiority’, in which champions are expected to rotate, and no single team or player is guaranteed absolute victory (DaMatta 2017). In competitive sports and music competitions, the outcome is similar. ‘From a group

of selected candidates who are equal – they are all subject to pre-defined rules and have the same chance of success’ (McCormick 2009, p. 24). In other words, winning a match depends on relative, not absolute performance, and ‘no matter how much better Tiger Woods is than any other golfer in the world, he is never guaranteed to win a tournament’ (Szymanski 2003, p. 469).

Pre- and post-match discussions are also credited to the value of tournaments as they provide opportunities to scale social interaction, even among strangers, building expectations and social dramas, often propelled by the local media, and social media. In klopse, post-match discussions are frequently centred around the internal politics of the game, which can sometimes escalate to non-match discussions and differences that would otherwise be difficult to appease in everyday life. Every year competitions create new stories, which are told and retold by the very people who create these stories, gathering to measure themselves against others, and striving to shine and become the next carnival champion. Discussions are a resource for attracting new players, and a way to ensure that old players continue playing. By engaging in competitions and making the event attractive, the community is able to ensure networks of solidarity, reorient social priorities, and expose and remedy social ills in the communities, shifting potentially deviant energy away from mischief (see Footnote 5 on page 131).

3.2.2 *Contest for legitimacy and social capital*

Music competitions have a long and evolving history in the field of Western classical music. ‘Historically, they have provided an arena for nations to demonstrate cultural superiority through the artistic excellence of their musicians’ (McCormick 2009, p. 6). Music competitions have also started to gain some attention in the field of popular music with the rising popularity of the global *Idols* franchise and other reality tv shows, all of which have been criticised for articulating ‘fantasies about social mobility and meritocracy’, creating ‘fake’ celebrities and blurring the division between branding and entertainment (de Bruin and Zwaan 2016), as new marketing models are seeking to maximise emotional connections between the fan and the product (Jenkins 2006).

In Western classical music, competitions are a site for legitimisation, one that ‘controls the distribution of symbolic capital’, creating distinctions between elite and ‘lesser’ musicians (McCormick 2009). During competitions, musicians communicate various social characteristics (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, and so on), ‘display[ing] for others the meaning of their social situation’ (Alexander 2004 cited in McCormick 2009, p. 7). Music competitions also create opportunities for status accumulation, helping committed individuals establish and kick start music careers, at the same time contributing to the mechanisation of musical performance, while producing ‘first prize obsession’ that often leads to frustration and destruction of young talents (McCormick 2009). As with other competitive rituals, music competitions facilitate social interaction and communicate patterns of social and economic formations, ‘where differences are made public and defended, and where

difference as “norms” is contested, equalized and subverted in ways that would be difficult to resolve in everyday life’ (Gunderson and Barz 2000, p. 11). Sports and cultural competitions exist for a very long time, ‘serv[ing] as a forum for exchange between different people and for “peaceful” resolution of rivalry and conflict’ (Schwery and Cade 2009, p. 473).

What all competitive events have in common are team antagonism and conflict, a contest of sports, and the declaration of a winner. In the matter of competition, what is the prize that is won? In most cases, it is prestige and the accumulation of social capital (Gunderson and Barz 2000, p. 12).

In addition to providing a forum for the formation of social capital, a big constituent of klopse is ‘how you get yourself ready for this competition (...) your commitment and your dedication’ (Ilias, personal communication, 5/4/2015). In the case of D6’s singing pack, what motivates young men to meet at the *klopskamer* for long hours of practice dedicated to improving skill? ‘Why [would] young guys want to practice the whole day on a Sunday?’ (Ilias, personal communication, 5/4/2015). In the end, participants express a sense of purpose, driven by passion and emotional arousal, through which they become part of something bigger and more powerful than themselves. They become attached to the game and their fellow members, with whom they have learned to resonate on all stages leading to failure and success. Klopse also provides entertainment value, one that is affordable and owned by the community, fostering friendship, community formation, and urban associations, insofar as validating the enormous effort invested, which for a very long time have outweighed the loss of precious time² and resources³ involved in playing the game.

3.3 PLAYING THE GAME

3.3.1 *Making a name in the industry*

There are trade-offs to playing klopse, and the game comes with a price. Putting a new troupe ‘on the road’ is expensive and logistics can be overwhelming. Troupe owners who are unable to meet transaction costs may sometimes join a separate team as a member of the committee until he is able to reorganise his own team. Established troupes are the result of hard work, marketing strategies, good management skills, and trial and error, eventually becoming nuclei of informal income-earning opportunities ‘through their own indigenous enterprise’

² ‘Coming back to time management where this game is concerned, that is the type of passion, and we speak about sacrifice, sacrifice in this sport is about offering your time, time is precious, Jonathan, I mean, you would never get back the days that you’ve passed. Time is precious, but to some of us, this is just the way, we are very dedicated with this game’ (Issam, personal communication, 19/4/2015).

³ ‘It’s an expensive hobby; it’s an expensive game’ (Rashad, personal communication, 18/4/2015).

(Hart 1973, p. 89), and ‘granting a significant agency to the urban subaltern’ (Bayat 2010, p. 50). ‘What we [klopse community] have come up with, is we created our own competitions to accommodate our own culture and our own circumstance’ (Adeela, personal communication, 10/4/2015).⁴ As a result of social exclusion, troupes ‘grew out of the community’s own need for a new social institution (...), [as] a direct response to the alien presence and to the preexisting local social and political order’ (Ranger 1975), in which musicians are able to supplement income sources and extend their field of social action. As a side note, it is not clear whether participation increases or decreases with social mobility.

In most cases, income earnings are not much, and likely not enough, but this does not exclude the fact that carnival is still a point of entry into the music industry, and a bridge to work opportunities inside and outside carnival. Talent assessment in klopse is common and a good number of skilled musicians have been able to escalate their status in the game by ‘making a name in the coon industry’, escaping increasing exploitation of wage labour, and reconciling socially meaningful activities with their means of income, although as Jones (1977, p. 169) notes, ‘the greatest “social control” – if one wants to use that word – available to capitalism is the wage relationship itself’.

While carnival musicians remain mostly inward reaching (Bruinders 2012), incremental steps are being made to internationalise klopse music. Having performed every year since 2011 for the *Carnaval International de Victoria* in Seychelles, the group 7 Steps Minstrel is one example.⁵ Some troupe and band members are also involved in a number of paid activities in and outside carnival. One credible and established musician in the industry is Taqiy, D6’s singing coach and comic composer, who was able to win consecutive titles over the years, which he attributes to his experience as a professional musician and sound engineer in the field of popular music and variety shows, giving him some advantage over nonprofessional opponents. In recent years, however, with increasing state subsidy⁶ and professionalisation, troupes have been ‘upping their game’ by hiring coaches with similar musical abilities. For Taqiy, troupes operate much like professional sports, in which sought-after musicians, artists and coaches are enticed with money offers by troupe captains in exchange for contracts and services.

Interview 3.1: It’s a sport, like soccer, like rugby. If Real Madrid sees Ronaldo in Manchester United, and there’s a good player in there and it

⁴ ‘Do you think somebody in the Cape Flats that has a competitive spirit, plays golf? Or that has a competitive spirit, always has the money to buy the equipment? With the boots or anything else for any competitive sport? So when you belong to a troupe, that’s where your competitive spirit comes out’ (Adeela, personal communication, 10/4/2015).

⁵ Not everyone agrees with the internationalisation of klopse, and some consultants even condemn professional groups from ‘abandoning’ the local community. For Joel, ‘you first sort out your own house and then you can go on the outside’ (personal communication, 28/4/2015).

⁶ There have been numerous claims that the ANC is ‘pumping money’ into klopse to attract coloured support in the Western Cape, currently run by the opposition (DA), and the only province not run by the National Government (ANC).

comes with a good prize and they afford him, they'll take him. They'll give him an offer, and this is exactly [how it works] in the troupe, if they see this coach has been winning for so many years, they'll start knocking on your door, and they'll ask you:

— Hey sorry man not to bother you, but we're from xyz troupe, we believe that you are Santam District Six, () did you sign a contract this year? ((laughs)) And I will say:

— Not (yet), but yeah, what's the reason?

— No because we're interested in you.

— OK, what now?

— Yeah, what is your price? What does Santam pay? We offer you double. Whatever they give, we give you double.

I had an[other] incident where a troupe [owner] came in front of my door, they offered me a Mini Cooper [car], in front of my door, plus R90,000.00 cash just to have me there. (...) Troupe owners will go out of their way to win, they will pay you a lot of money, they'll pay from 40 to 50 thousand rand up to 1 million rand just to win a carnival (Taqiy, personal communication, 1/5/2015).

With some exception, every year players and coaches are bought and traded, moving to the troupes with the best offers. Klopse and music-making opportunities create small and medium scale income-earning opportunities outside the organised labour market, which can become especially appealing for the unemployed and underemployed, but money alone is not enough reason to justify competitions, provided that most members are not benefiting financially from the game. As a result of wider processes of social and economic restructuring in both the internal structure of the game and the broader political society, some consultants claim that money contracts, increasing professionalisation, and the fact that musicians are being traded to the highest bidders are, in fact, eroding social capital, instilling frustration, and posing new challenges, especially among those who are in it not for the money but for intrinsic purposes.

3.3.2 *Becoming an asset in the troupe*

While, on the one hand, some musicians have managed to obtain prestige and subsequent financial gains from the game, on the other hand, a disproportional majority is expected to invest their own resources, especially through the acquisition of proportionally expensive uniforms. Also, as carnival is becoming more competitive each year, practices are becoming more demanding, which can go as far as marriage breakups, as some consultants suggest. For Issam, losing precious family time 'can be very detrimental towards your marriage' (personal communication, 19/4/2015), although for the majority of participants this sacrifice is usually offset by their love for the sport. In most cases, committed players will try to reconcile klopse, work, and family time, and even persuade family members to

join the troupe in order to vent some of the stress and spend more quality time together. Furthermore, with few safe spaces to hangout and socialise on the Cape Flats, klopse becomes an appealing alternative for many of those living in violent neighbourhoods.

Bands and troupes not only provide safer places for social interaction, but they are also cheaper substitutes for mainstream entertainment,⁷ in which carnival's mode of production is built largely outside the economic mainstream, creating currencies around social relationships, which are important means of exchange for those in low-income communities, whose access to resources and leisure provided by the mainstream economy is severely restricted. The idea of music as a locus to create accessible learning communities in township areas resonates with working-class loyalist culture and social life in Northern Ireland,

if only because there are so few other cultural options open. Certainly there is nowhere else a child in Ballykeel can go where he will be given a musical instrument and many hours of tuition without charge, and there are probably few other opportunities for a Ballykeel child to experience the acclamation from the adult world which band members receive once the tunes are mastered (Ramsey 2011, pp. 246–247).

Safety and cheap leisure alone, however, are also not enough reason to justify competition and the immense effort that goes with it. Perhaps a more adequate theory, which appears with some frequency in the analysis, and likewise resonates with working-class bandsmen in Northern Ireland, is that members are seeking recognition, 'to experience the acclamation from the adult world', become valued in the troupe and have self-worth in their activities. They seek to extract a sense of purpose in what they do, not through mere technical executions, but through relatedness with other human components. In discussing the differences between professional and amateur troupes, one consultant describes the recognition he gained from coaching a team in the lower division.

Interview 3.2: There's a lot of problems happening behind the scenes. People are not being treated right. [In the] bad team you establish yourself as an asset to them, you become more of a need, you are more respected, they appreciate you more. (...) People used to treat me like their own son (Saif, personal communication, 3/5/2015).

On being treated with respect, Saif suggests that appreciation is less present among professional teams where labour force is more easily bought. The longing for recognition, and the sense of purpose drawn from social relationships, are thus a more reasonable justification for determining team membership. On my last day

⁷ Thanks to Adeela for introducing the notion of 'affordable competition' (personal communication, 10/4/2015). Likewise, as a troupe member told Mason (2010b, p. 49), 'Carnival is our holiday. We don't have houses by the sea. We don't fly away to Paris, This is all we have'.

in Cape Town, at the airport on my way back to Dublin, as I was waiting in the queue to check-in, Sameer, a D6 member who at the time was working for Emirates, approached me and said: 'You played drums for the Best Band, follow me'. I was hesitant to jump the queue, but he insisted and so I went. On local terms, 'he sorted me out'. He gave me an aisle seat (which there were none available when booking from the internet) and one in the front row with the most space for the legs, and he did this for both connecting flights.

The same happened before entering the airplane. He insisted that I went first, and so, with out any hassle, I made my way in with a feeling of gratitude. Sameer knew I was on my way back, and thus it was very unlikely that he was expecting anything in return. He did what fellow troupe members do and what is expected of them. It is also possible that the occasion allowed him to show off his authority, perhaps granting him a reassuring feeling of control. After all, *klopse* is a marker of identity, and that identity acts as a form of currency and marker of status. Whatever the case may be, I felt recognised and imagined how my contribution might have helped the team win the second prize. Our common experience during and leading to competitions became the social thread binding our existence together, and the reason why troupe membership subsist for such a long time as tokens of exchange and solidarity. His gesture, I believe, is a summary of what keeps competitions running and the *klopse* spirit alive, one that provides extended and meaningful relationships in spite and because of trials and tribulations, especially among many of those struggling with the high costs of living in a world city. In a sense, carnival creates certain tokens that members exchange in their daily lives, repositioning themselves away from subordination and the limitations imposed by it.

3.3.3 *Team building and rewards*

Core members of the troupe undergo intensive team building activities to improve the group's social relation and performance, emphasising heroic values for being in the arena and defending their title. Over time, they become emotionally attached to the troupe and its members, and their identities eventually merge with the identity of the team. Aroused by their music leaders and peers, troupe members soon become part of something larger than themselves, making them stronger, and their will merges into the collective will, allowing them to embrace the collective goals of competition. Not all members, however, are core members of the team. One distinction between core members and service providers is that the former receives no financial reward. Members of the pack and other core members do it for intrinsic purposes, or as they sometimes say 'for the love of the sport'. Band musicians, on the other hand, are often part of a separate organisation, usually a brass or *haut* (wood) band, providing services to the troupe during the entire season.

Band musicians may also be intrinsically motivated, but in general the interpersonal relationship among those invested as core members and singers of the pack varies considerably to those whose musical relationship is, in a sense, financial.

This does not mean that being paid necessarily excludes the intrinsic experiences of music-making, but that under contract conditions, musicians are expected to behave according to the role they play in the troupe. For example, band members are not allowed to drink or use drugs while on duty.⁸ They often sit together on the bleachers as one unit and are expected to follow certain rules under the aegis of the band master. Musical improvisations are also discouraged.⁹ Discipline and professionalism, arguably more so than musicianship, ensures a good reputation and increases the likelihood of future employment.

In the case of the singing pack, team building is a strategy employed to create excitement, strengthen social bonds and their passion for the sport. Singing in the pack requires commitment, cooperation and hard work, and although some overlap between band and choir membership exist, it is in the pack that musicians acquire intimacy and emotional attachment to their team and the sport, amplified by frequent motivational speeches carried out by coaches and troupe captains, instigating troupe rivalry and bringing a new level of excitement to the game. Bonding experiences are not only important in keeping the team competitive and creating affinity and large scale cooperation with strangers, but they also produce psychic income that becomes a viable alternative when money and other forms of capital are scarce. In contrast to band members and other service providers, work for pack musicians is not measured in terms of money, but in terms of pleasure, prestige, and excitement, with a clearer separation between work and play. Klopse competition is, after all, a mental game, 'fraught with controversy and emotional levels can run the entire gamut from complete elation to utter despair' (Bruinders 2012, p. 144).

3.3.4 *Troupe loyalty, trust and promises*

From track suits to enticing players, klopse and team sports have a lot in common. One distinguishing characteristic, however, is that troupe uniforms change every year, a tradition that exists prior to the establishment of competitions. Uniform colours are chosen early by troupe captains, and no two troupes can have the same colours. There are also different types of uniform within a troupe, each ascribing to a different meaning and status. Troupe fans will sometimes collect old uniforms, none of which referencing from which troupe the uniform belonged, at least not without prior knowledge. Another distinguishing characteristic is that team loyalty is not always a given in klopse. This is because when a friend or

⁸ 'They are not allowed to drink in the carnival because they are getting paid' (Joel, personal communication, 23/4/2015).

⁹ A troupe can be composed of several music organisations, in which case conflicts between musicians and organisations are common. Players are sometimes criticised either for 'blowing' (playing) high notes and improvising too frequently, or putting their instruments down and *jolling* while others are working. 'People want to hear the song, not how high you can play', or 'people want to look at the band, not at the individual' (Joel, personal communication, 23/4/2015). In the case of Young Sunrise Brass Band (YSBB), the band master stresses the motto 'one band, one sound' from the movie *Drumline* (2002) to reinforce unity and prevent others from 'over blowing'.

a group of friends leave, it is likely that others will follow. If a troupe member engages in a relationship with someone from another team, it is also likely that one or the other will leave. After all, 'a troupe is not just the brand, it's the social relationships' (Adeela, personal communication, 10/4/2015).

Internal strifes and differences are another reason, and especially when money is involved, tension can build up quickly. There are two ways in which finance can leverage membership and loyalty. First, when musicians are traded to the highest bidder, and second when they are not paid the amount agreed, sometimes as a result of having been enticed with false promises. Government subsidy also provides an added incentive for those who can afford the initial costs of putting a new troupe 'on the road', in which case, with enough capital, motivation, and management skill, troupe members can eventually establish their own troupes, and become their own bosses.

Another indicator of loyalty is the interplay between recognition and commitment, or how much a member 'puts in', and how much he or she receives in return. One example is the sequin jacket, a more elaborate type of uniform worn by those with higher ranks in the troupe. The jacket holds its value as a symbol of status, contrasting with the more trivial uniforms worn by ordinary members (*soldate*). In the words of a troupe musician, 'whatever troupe they go they want to be seen in the director gear (...). If D6 is not giving me that gear then I'm leaving, and then he takes 10 guys with him because they are all friends' (Ilias, personal communication, 5/4/2015).

3.3.5 *Sequin jacket and status*

'What people fear when they engage in the struggle is not that they will fail to get their breakfast next morning, but that they will fail to outshine their neighbors' (Kohn 1992, p. 8). As some consultants suggest, members compete for status, if only in some cases to brush off the impression of poverty and failure. Although not always the case, a sequin jacket is a costly signal and marker of social and economic status. Designed to be seen by others, the jacket serves to advertise those who wear it, if only to improve one's public reputation as an expression of their superior rank. Notions of hedonism, ostentation, and the presence of conspicuous consumption in the New Year Carnival appear as early as the 19th century (Bickford-Smith 2003). In the context of 'lower class' Caribbean society, Wilson (1969, p. 76, see also Ramsey 2011) observes that '[t]he way money is spent – the fact that it is *spent* – is related to the basic complex of values dominating the lives and social relations' of the underclass. This dramaturgical action springs from resilient responses to local conditions, through which individuals are able to display economic power, at least within the boundaries of carnival.

A young Caribbean 'peasant' cannot become 'respectable' in part because he cannot participate economically or politically in the total societal system within which 'respectability' is the chief value. He is

unskilled and hence cannot begin to climb the economic status ladder to achieve an income that will permit him to assume the signs of respectability. But at the same time he is politically, legally and economically under the rule of the total society, and those who impress the rule on him are alien – of a different ‘class’ and/or a different race and/or a different nationality. From this situation arise the circumventions, the misunderstandings, and the real differences reflected in conduct and values (Wilson 1969, p. 82).

His interpretation of the Puerto Rican society may not be too far from working-class urban realities in Cape Town. It shows that through isolation from mainstream and ‘politically constituted society’, marginalised groups acquire the means to extend their system of value and opportunities for self-glorification, enacting and recreating ‘specific conditions of social, political, legal and economic relatedness’ that become accessible from conditions of social exclusion. In exploring notions of respectability among musicians of the Christmas Band Movement, one of the three main branches of the *ghoema*, Bruinders (2013, p. 141) argues that, as a form of existential fulfilment, carnivals ‘are discursive strategies of the powerless, which involve community spectacles of visual and sonic display’, providing alternate spaces through which performers ‘find meaning for their lives’. Moreover, ‘it is through these activities that they enact a dignity and respectability denied them by history and still denied them because of their ongoing social and cultural marginalization in the present’ (Bruinders 2012, p. 140). In his work with loyalist flute bands in Northern Ireland, Ramsey (2011) discusses similar notions of respectability amongst working-class musicians, showing how bands of the ‘Melody’ genre claim superiority over the ‘Blood & Thunder’ genre through their ability to read music and perform military marches featuring part-harmonies and complex military drumming techniques. These skills constitute a form of cultural capital which the Blood & Thunder bands, playing traditional tunes learnt aurally without the use of harmony or complex drumming, are lacking. In the case of klopse,

Interview 3.3: the troupes and their positions within the troupe define them () the sequin jacket, who I am is a definition, who I am within the troupe is a definition of who I am, who my character is, and that plays a huge role (...) *Blink baadjie* [shiny jacket] is the sequin jacket, this is actually what it is, the sequin jacket, and it’s again, it’s a hierarchy, and if people can’t be in positions of power, again, that comes down to human nature (Adeela, personal communication, 10/4/2015).

As Adeela and others suggest, recognition is an indicator of loyalty and their willingness to compete, even among those who do not possess the means to acquire the sequin jacket, or a director’s gear. In fact, troupe captains have realised this psychological need for recognition, frequently acknowledging the work and sacrifice of the core members of his team, and ensuring that everyone, however

low in the rank, receives fair treatment and adequate recognition to his or her contribution.¹⁰ As Marco observed, ‘people (...) want to feel a sense of appreciation’, suggesting that the amount of loyalty entrusted is perhaps proportional to the recognition received. Those whose input is not valued at a certain frequency becomes more vulnerable to false promises, eventually leaving the troupe and making wrong decisions.

Interview 3.4: Maybe he felt he put a lot into that team and he didn’t get the respect, or didn’t get out what he really deserve. That’s why a lot of guys move out. Mostly it goes over money or you don’t recognise me as a director or as a captain (Rashad, personal communication, 18/4/2015).

Interview 3.5: Besides being paid, also recognition. You’re working and working and your boss is not seeing what you’re doing. If someone else sees me, and he values me more, and he offers me more, so obviously I’m gonna go (Marco, personal communication, 16/4/2015).

In addition to recognition, the need to feel challenged is also important, and as one percussionist argues, musicians leave when they feel under-challenged:

Interview 3.6: I think a lot of guys are realising that they actually need to get in professional guys to teach them other things. Otherwise it’s gonna be the same in and out and the kids are gonna get bored, that’s why people also leave, because they are looking for their challenge (Marco, personal communication, 16/4/2015).

Sequin jackets are also used by gangsters to signal their superior status, in which case a troupe captain might sell his jacket in exchange for money despite the risks involved. As one musician explained, there have been inter-troupe gang rivalry and fights in the past, and the presence of gangsters in carnival is frequent, even if gang fights have become less common. ‘Gang structures’, according to Baxter (1996, pp. 192–193), ‘invariably paralleled troupe hierarchies to the extent that power and status between the two were interchangeable’. Today,

Interview 3.7: you’ll find a drug dealer wanting to entertain his guys that time because it’s festive season that time, he would say ‘oк, we as a gang, we’re going to belong to a certain troupe’, so then that gang leader, maybe also because of his status, his macho status, then he would want a director gear, for example, you know where it comes in now. He wants to be seen in the same- he don’t want to be lower than

¹⁰ ‘Bottom line is how you treat your people, how you keep them happy, what you give over to them. How you honour them, how you appreciate them, the time they are giving, sacrificing their family’ (Ilias, personal communication, 5/4/2015).

[x] and [y], you see. Now he pays whatever it costs to have the best suit, like [x] and [y], and the rest of his guys [are] also in the troupe for [his] protection, they won't let him be alone, the main guy. Now you'll find the same thing happening at another team, now you'll find sometimes in the stadium it's two rival gangs, that is where you see the knife fighting. You see, because now those () also, and now () in different colours, in different teams, we've had a drink or two, fight, they're fighting (Issam, personal communication, 19/4/2015).

The recent surge of professional participation and commercial activity has also had an impact on troupe loyalty. While it is true that bigger teams have become attractive, gaining popularity and concentrating a larger share of the market (sometimes in the expense of 'sinking' smaller teams), there are also those who are more likely to endorse an amateur celebration, and who would rather move to smaller teams instead, sometimes in the hope of reestablishing self-confidence and regaining recognition by competing on more equal grounds. 'Th[e] simplest explanation is that most competitors lose most of the time. By definition not everyone can win, and, in practice, few do' (Kohn 1992, pp. 108–109). Even when members are struggling to find their place in the troupe, very few people actually abandon competitions entirely, and lose their 'competitive spirit'.

Interview 3.8: If you're putting in 40 hours and you get nothing for that item you're losing 40 hours, and then you will find at the end of the season 'no, I'm not going to play this sport anymore' (...) [but] as Ramadan is finished, just going to the same thing ((laughs)) we're just going in the same direction again, everyone is slowly coming to the *klopskamer* again. Some will sit around until the music is playing and everyone is just on the wagon again (Issam, personal communication, 19/4/2015).

While true that playing in more established teams increases the chances of lifting trophies and gaining bragging rights, not all members are appeased if their efforts are not being appreciated. As a result, amateur teams have become appealing alternatives, and although there are also drawbacks to working in smaller teams, financial constraints being one of them, they are generally offset by the incentive to regain pride and self-confidence. With increasing unemployment rates in the post-apartheid era, frustration is likely to have also increased. In her work on Christmas Bands in the Western Cape, Bruinders (2013, p. 141) contends that the working-class coloured people among whom she conducted research 'do not necessarily feel that much has changed for them' as a result of the democratic elections. I also heard similar reactions. Coloured people will often accuse the ANC of transferring their jobs to the blacks through affirmative action legislations, like the BEE, that prioritises those whose violation of human rights in the past were the most severe. It not only serves to redress previous imbalances, but also

to shift previously disenfranchised blacks into the country's economic mainstream, perhaps leaving coloureds in slight disadvantage in the job market when compared to the status they held during apartheid. What I am trying to suggest is that klopse 'creat[es] autonomous social spaces for the reassertion of dignity and the restoration of self esteem' (Reily 2002, p. 20). Even if these opportunities come and go in the form of hope, ephemeral and imaginary success, it is still a far deal more optimistic than the opportunities many of them face when competing outside, and in the words of a coloured consultant, 'a coloured person (...) will only be himself with a[nother] coloured person' (Taqiy, personal communication, 1/5/2015).

* * *

In this chapter, I explored the nature of competitions, reward structure, and incentives to participate, arguing that with limited material resources, klopse competitions are cheaper substitutes for mainstream entertainment, providing alternative means to meet the needs for recognition and self-glorification. As a medium of socialisation and dramatisation of society, competitions make up an important part of the community's social calendar, creating opportunities to acquire prestige, soften the hardship of poverty and menial labour, and be looked at with respect, introducing cooperation and structure against an environment of utter despair. Like sports, klopse carnival also challenges capitalist logic in that contests are governed by rules, democracy, mutual respect, and fairness (fair play). The question next is what happens when capitalist/wage relations and deceitful strategies are introduced? What happens when the desire for success cannot match actual resources to fulfil those desires and the growing demands of the game?

4 *Forging success in a world of failure*

IN THE STRUGGLE for success, troupes are often turning to politics and requiring deceitful strategies to outdo their opponents and put themselves in a better position. Whether players are in it for fun, profit, social relations, musical, altruistic, or emotional rewards, they are all seeking to maximise the value of their participation. But as troupes are becoming more competitive and more reliant on economic and political power, the struggle for victory is becoming more toilsome and centralised, with sponsors, supporters, Board and troupe leaders exercising increasing control over the means of production, game design, and repertoire. In this chapter, I will argue that those whose quest for success in the formal economy have been suppressed, resort to cultural forms of contests as a play of power and means of forging an appearance of success and participating in the social and political life denied in the larger society. I would argue the ability to control music and musicians is a reflection of power and measure of status, which at the same time reflects the very structures of society in which political power held by a small minority exerts outright control over the social structure, creating resentments experienced by those not in positions of power.

Similar to inner-city ghettos in the United States, township residents in Cape Town 'face certain social constraints on the choices they can make in their daily lives. These constraints, combined with restricted opportunities in the larger society, lead to ghetto-related behavior and attitudes' (Wilson 1997, p. 52), which too often cruelly reinforce the economic marginality of its residents. Government policies are also contributing to the evolution of townships and economic deprivation, by which governments are bending to the needs of investors rather than those of its citizens. Likewise, efforts to reduce poverty often 'focus (...) on the shortcomings of individuals and families and not on the structural and social changes in the society at large that have made life so miserable for many inner-city ghetto residents' (Wilson 1997, p. 53). The question then is whether culture can serve as a foothold towards a life of more joy and less struggle, perhaps as a resource for minimising the strains of aristocratic control, and hence maximising their field of social action.

Like Taylor (2012, p. 5), I focus on the role of consumption in promoting capitalism, which made 'goods and consumption part of our habitus'. My reflections

draw loosely on Marx's distinction between productive and unproductive labour to account for the social relationships that are being mediated in the current political economy of troupes. For Marx, '[a] singer who sings like a bird is an unproductive worker. When she sells her song, she is a wage earner or merchant. But the same singer, employed by someone else to give concerts and bring in money, is a productive worker because she directly produced capital' (Marx 1968, p. 393 cited in Attali 1985, p. 39). In essence, the difference between money and capital is that money is a means of exchange, whereas capital is money as means of acquiring more of it. By this definition, a solo artist hired by a troupe owner is a wage earner, a seller of commodity, not a productive labourer, whereas a troupe owner, when employing musicians to market his or her team, creates capital and engages in what he considers productive labour.

Thus, considering troupes as sellers of labour, my intention is to understand the ways in which members adjust to the pressures of commerce, and the globalised music economy, to negotiate capitalism and the resources available. It appears, for instance, that as participants become acquainted and users of technology, in particular smartphones and the Web 2.0, klopse and advertising are coming closer, creating new forms of capitalist cultures and relationships to music. This is to say that effective use of the internet is a low-cost means of marketing a troupe, in which

they seek to claim funding among a growing number of NGO arts and culture initiatives. No longer merely a minstrel troupe, they are now a 'minstrel organization' with 'professional standards' and a mandate of 'gender equality, accountability, and inclusivity of communities', working to sustain a one-hundred year old heritage practice with origins in slavery and to assist 'underprivileged youth' through professional development (Inglese 2016, p. 249).

In the process, new relationships between the troupe and the brand are being created, forging modernity and ways of being professional and accessing larger audiences as part of their self-making projects, and even perhaps 'circumvent[ing] the gatekeeping practices of conventional mass media' (Haupt 2012, p. 116). While apartheid and capitalism marginalised Black subjects, hindering 'their ability to control the means of representation' (Haupt 2012, p. 132), working-class coloureds have turned inward to create klopse-related desires and attitudes. I remember, for instance, the level of detail and enthusiasm in which directors discussed uniform design, speaking as if they were designing for the Milan Fashion Week, when I realised my crude inability to perceive those combinations of stripes and colours as *their* interpretation of modernity, conceived as their ticket to success. As an emerging capitalist culture, klopse is 'a powerful means of fashioning one's self in an era of heightened consumption' (Taylor 2015, p. 4), extending opportunities for success and self-glorification outside menial labour and the larger society, or perhaps as a 'stretched value system' in Rodman's (1963) term.

By the value stretch I mean that the lower-class person, without abandoning the general values of the society, develops an alternative set of values. Without abandoning the values places upon success, such as high income and high educational and occupational attainment, he stretches the values so that lesser degrees of success also become desirable. Without abandoning the values of marriage and legitimate child birth he stretches these values so that a non-legal union and legally illegitimate children are also desirable. The result is that the members of the lower class, in many areas, have a wider range of values than others within the society. They share the general values of the society with members of other classes, but in addition they have stretched these values, or developed alternative values, which help them to adjust to their deprived circumstances (Rodman 1963, p. 209).

The band that refused to eat. While capitalist social relations create opportunities, interdependence (even if through financial trade), and road maps to business and self-management, they can also create harmful monopolies and concentrations of power, controlling music and musicians as a means for leveraging power. According to one consultant, 'most of the [troupe] owners have something running. Some of them are drug dealers, some of them maybe has gangsters or whatever but still, we- you as a member of that team, we don't judge them on that'. In a condescending and presumptuous story of money and power, he went on to tell me about an incident when he was playing for one of the bands, a service provider, which at the time was performing on behalf of another team. As soon as the troupe arrived at the *klopskamer*, they were greeted with a *tafel* (food table) by one of the owners, who was also a merchant (dealer). Yet, as troupe members were eating, bandsmen gathered and said:

Interview 4.1: 'This is a drug dealer, we shouldn't eat of him', and he [dealer] came with a pot of food and they just stood up and said, 'sorry, we cannot eat your food' and that was like a smack in his face, you know, and then from there, lot's of conflict grew, my man, because they disrespected him by not wanting to eat his food. The rumours went, [and] the next year they weren't playing in his league, in his section, do you know that? The next year it's as if- this isn't what it is but it could've been a situation where he told the different teams which belongs to his Board 'do not employ that band', you know, and that band wasn't employed by any of the teams within his Board. They went to play in some different section. (...) That caused conflict, the band then was obviously going to play by a team because they [were] a big band, they were gonna play by a team within his league. That didn't happen. Probably because of him telling his members 'guys, this band did this to me, I don't want [them] in my Board, so if you got them, fire

them' (Saif, personal communication, 3/5/2015).

Once again, economic power becomes pervasive as far as defining social relationships, and as some consultants propound, troupe leaders are enticing musicians and enthralling them with money and similar offers. Fatalistically, one consultant stated that 'I'm more sincere to the regional way of playing this game, playing this sport, even though I'm very loyal and sincere towards that aspect of it, I'm forced to also go for the money, I'm forced to do it, everyone is doing it, I might as well just join in, because what difference am I going to make' (Issam, personal communication, 19/4/2015). But despite conforming to the status quo and how the game developed over the years, he goes on to express some hope, 'I want my son, my one year old son turning two [not to] get into this culture and tradition because of money and what some troupe owners is going to own him but purely, sincerely, for the sake of what our culture has been established, the principles of (...) our culture' (Issam, personal communication, 19/4/2015). There is a clear gulf in his speech between carnival and capitalism, hope and compliance, which seems to reflect a broader concern among klopse practitioners. Likewise, despite his role as a bandsman and service provider, another consultant mentioned preferring 'less responsibility' over work, or not being bound by work relations, when it comes to joining a team, although for some, carnival employment is a force of necessity, and for many young artists, it is an introductory experience to wage relations, and a doorway for 'stretched' success.¹

4.1 THE MEDIATION OF POLITICS

4.1.1 *Curbing the culture and scapegoating*

While consultants' discussions often converge on the economic aspects of carnival, joy is for sure the *raison d'être* of klopse, and likely the single most valued asset of the game, albeit for participants the distinction between joy and winning is not always clear. In fact, a big part of klopse is preparing for competitions, the work and sacrifice they put in, and with so much time and sweat invested in the process, expectedly, every team wants to win. In truth, troupes struggle for success even when the outcome benefits only a small fraction of players as far as lifting trophies, and despite competitions becoming increasingly demanding, there are strategies to improving the odds. For example, not without much contention, rival captains will often scapegoat troupes whose gimmicks they are unable to outperform. As competitions develop, performance gimmicks and other innovations are either stifled or absorbed by the rest of the troupes, and in cases when gimmicks are rejected by rivals, troupes can collectively pressure the Board to change the game's

¹ This struggle between complying with professional/market demands and participating in music-making as a source of enjoyment also resonates with Tsioulakis' (2013) research among jazz musicians in Athens, in which he observes a tendency among these musicians to conceive 'specific performance as a playful break from their otherwise acclaimed busy careers' (Tsioulakis 2013, p. 231), and musical enjoyment as an intrinsic activity, which often even exclude the audience from the process.

criteria in the interest of handicapping stronger contestants.

Participants will also attempt to find holes in the game's criteria in order to seize dominance. Taqiy, whose gimmicks have been curbed a number of times, explains that gimmicks are a way to stand out from the rest, introduce musical novelties, and ensure more points in the competition. The problem, however, is that troupe authorities are continuously trying to regulate creative outputs from music producers, curbing whatever it is that they excel at rather than allowing the culture to flourish on its own. In other words, 'if others can't do it, then they wanna curb you from doing it' (Taqiy, personal communication, 1/5/2015). That is, if the gimmick is choreography, rival captains will pressure the Board to amend regulations applied to choreography.² Under the pressure of numerous constraints being imposed on the music, Taqiy fears that youngsters will lose interest in the tradition. For him and others, the reason for an increase in youth participation is precisely because troupes are reflecting the musics they enjoy, endowing them the opportunity to impersonate these artists and act as producers of the music they consume.

Interview 4.2: The youngsters love this new era that has come to the coons, that is why the coons are full of youngsters, it used to be full of old guys, guys that took off work, but youngsters are joining because we are giving what the youngsters also want, so what could happen is, the carnival could just drop again, if they don't put their differences aside. (...) But now you are so narrow minded because you are so greedy to win that you are prepared to cut your legs off, and those are the problems that you could be facing now, and that is gonna cause money problems, money problems in terms of will the investors still give that amount of money, is it worth for them? (Taqiy, personal communication, 1/5/2015).

As another consultant also said, troupes compete not only against themselves, but also against the overwhelming attention of 'media, radio, internet, television', and are being forced-fed advertising and idyllic ways of being as part of the inherent dynamics of consumer culture. 'When the kids put on the tv, it's MTV, they see all these superstars, you know, so that's another challenge we have' (Marco, personal communication, 16/4/2015). For the more conservative, music innovations are ambivalent in that they feel the need to preserve the roots of the tradition,

² 'They [troupe owners] get together and start complaining, so you as the boss sitting in the chair, you have to do what the captains want because without them you don't have a carnival. (...) Your other troupes, opposition member, you know, they actually-, they are jealous ((laughs)), they don't like the way you play, they want to win you, so they will do anything to bring you down. So if they can't do what you're doing, they are gonna go to the boss and say "hey, but this is not part of our culture", "hey, this was never done before", "hey, since when do you allow things like this", "hey", you know that kind of thing, just so that you can't win. So yeah, to them it's probably just about winning, but the broader picture is, you know, the culture could be showcased to the world, and that is what I want to do' (Taqiy, personal communication, 1/5/2015).

but at the same time realise the increasing appeal of pop culture among the youth. Troupes also compete against the gang and drug business, which too often seduce young men and boys into criminality as an attractive mode of livelihood and production.

Another challenge is what is known as the crab mentality, or dog in the manger, used as an analogy in human competitive behaviour to describe condescending attitudes toward the success of others, hindering others from relishing what one cannot enjoy. The metaphor refers to a basket of crabs, in which any one crab inside could easily escape, but instead is pulled down by others also trying to escape, ultimately halting the progress of those on top. The metaphor translates to the saying ‘if I can’t have it, neither can you’, embracing carnival as a zero-sum game in which winning is only achieved at the cost of bringing down others. In the words of one consultant, ‘if I can’t be the person in charge, then I don’t grant that person the right to be in charge (...) We are our own worst enemy (...) We don’t need other people to oppress us, we do it so well ourselves’ (Adeela, personal communication, 10/4/2015). Members are perhaps forging a sense of power and security by spitefully halting the progress of those who have better chances of success, or perhaps as a condescending response to coping with envy and other negative emotions. From a rival’s perspective, namely troupe owners and elected members of the Board, Taqiy explains:

Interview 4.3: ‘Lets cut it out. Less choreography and no more service’, meaning you can’t dress up... If I do ‘Thriller’ [by Michael Jackson], I dress up like ‘Thriller’. ‘No, you must perform in your minstrel uniform now’, I mean people wanna see ‘Thriller’, you know. For example, the comic, if I had to write about the sexy *moffie* [transvestite or gay male], you can’t dress like the *moffie* anymore. All this kind of nitty gritty and maybe my comic is five minutes long, now they said the comic must be three and a half minutes long, so wherever I won them with, they’re curbing me there. And what happened this year, they told me I can’t have all 25 men be on stage, in other words, you can’t jump off and come back on it, this is for Group Song now, you must have only 25 [people], if it’s over 25 you’re disqualified, you can be under 25, but not over 25, but all 25 must be on stage, no services are allowed, must be 5 minutes or under, no props allowed anymore, and you know, with D6 I brought props, I make you see things, so all that I couldn’t do (Taqiy, personal communication, 1/5/2015).

4.1.2 *Group song and secrecy (protecting gimmicks)*

The most prestigious item in klopse competition is the Group Song, ensuring bragging rights even if the team was unable to win the competition. Performed by twenty five of the best singers in the choir, and unlike other musical items, the Group Song is not required to conform to traditional minstrel feel, making

it perhaps the single best channel for innovation in the music culture. Group Song composers and choreographers make ample use of radio songs, British or American film soundtracks and TV musical comedies (e.g. *Glee* and *Pitch Perfect*), and other influences from American mainstream culture. The Group Song is a medley of three or four popular songs arranged in four to five-part harmony and accompanied by choreography and a backing track, although no pre-recorded vocal tracks are allowed.

In addition to style, repertoire, and the number of performers on stage, two distinguishing features of the Group Song are that, unlike comic songs, there are no soloists, and the entire process of preparing the show piece remains secret until the day of the performance. Access to Group Song rehearsals is strictly prohibited even to those with higher ranks in the troupe, and those involved take special precautions not to disclose information. Even the practice venue shifts frequently in order to decrease predictability and avoid snooping from rival opponents. While the reasons for secrecy are not entirely clear, consultants suggest that without secrecy, rivals can (and most likely will) steal songs, choreographies and gimmicks in the interest of manipulating results and preventing rivals from gaining competitive advantage. Secrecy not only protects the troupe that created the original arrangement, but it also builds expectation, thereby increasing the value of competition, which is why the Group Song is notably the most awaited item in competition events.

Stealing songs and gimmicks, however, is not the only way in which deceitful strategies are employed. Stealing musicians is also carried out among those who are able to sustain economic dominance in the game, seeking to maintain their teams competitive. The purpose of stealing musicians (or buying musicians away from a troupe) is not to put smaller teams out of business (although it can happen), but to manipulate results, which again appear as contests of power and success. In fact, incentives to bankrupt rival troupes are very unlikely. This is because, however small, rivals are much needed in keeping competitions functional and attractive to viewers, helping to increase the number of spectators and subsequent revenue collected from gate fees (ca. R40.00 per person). That is, even if the team's objective 'is to finish the season in a higher position than any of its rivals it has also a vested interest in the continuing success of its rivals in the league, for the more successful the rival in terms of league position and popularity, the larger will be the total attendance results from the common product' (Sloane 1971, p. 124). On competition days, higher-level troupes are also interspersed with lower-level troupes so as to prevent spectators from leaving the stadium when smaller teams are performing, indicating the economic incentive of running these competitions.

Irrespective of the end result, and the reasons for entering the game, winning a Group Song is a token of status and prestige, ensuring bragging rights until the following carnival. The item is also unique in that it represents the core players of the team, and entails hard work and cooperation from the performers on stage, eventually gaining respect and recognition from their accomplishments.

Those who were able to make it to the team, especially those singing on the front row close to the mics, usually through achieved status, and endure long weeks of intensive team building and practice sessions, especially if they are able to 'defend their title', acquire symbolic capital within and outside the group. The trajectory of successful musicians, as one consultant told me, also provides a source of inspiration for the younger generation, who aspire to sing in the pack, attend practices and mimic the steps of the more experienced musicians. Metaphorically, the Group Song is wealth, materialised in the form of musical performances and trophies, in which members contribute to creating, maintaining and protecting it, and later, if all goes well, ostensibly engage in a public display of economic superiority, as a way of asserting social status, and perhaps too provoking some envy on rivals.

4.1.3 *Stealing and persuasion*

By the 1960s, and perhaps before, troupes became an attractive source of income-earning opportunities, 'especially [with] the intrusion of organised gangsterism because sponsorship would mean easy money somewhere', according to a troupe veteran in the 1960s (Martin 2007, p. 10). With an increase in funding post-1994, '[t]here is now a widespread feeling that being involved in a *Klops* or a choir can bring money' (Gaulier and Martin 2017, p. 143). Gang affiliations apart, a troupe is a business, requiring careful planning and management, and as one journalist in 1968 said, 'you can blame it on business (...) When businessmen moved into the coon [minstrel] scene so that they could make money, it not only robbed some charities of much needed money, but it also took the spontaneity out of the coon carnival' (Martin 2007, p. 11). Over the years, playing klopse has become increasingly expensive, and not every troupe owner will have the financial means to play the auction game of bidding the best players and bands. In such cases, troupe owners may instead recourse to making 'false promises', and deceitful persuasion, as a last resource to bypass financial constraints and keep their teams competitive. It is not clear what the consequences are for those resorting to making false promises, besides perhaps building a bad reputation for themselves, but while persuasion can prevent a team from going out of business, it can also provide surplus in the form of exploitation. For example, during one of my interviews, a band master grizzled over not being paid the amount agreed, and condemns troupe owners for using carrot-and-stick approaches.

Interview 4.4: There are some people that can promise you the world, like we say in our terms, they can put a lot of jam on your lips, and you will lick it off, saying that you will believe what they are saying and they will go around your back and do another thing, as per not paying you for your services that you did as per your agreement with them (Joel, personal communication, 23/4/2015).

False promises can have far reaching consequences for those affected, as bands can break, and have broken in the past. As the middleman between troupe authorities and musicians, a band leader may be falsely (or in some cases rightly) accused of diverting money to himself. In the case of Young Sunrise Brass Band (YSBB), the band director fears that D6 will approach his musicians with offers that he is unable to compete, which if true, he will need to rebuild his organisation from 'scratch'. This process, as he said, can take years of music training before the band is able to reenter the market, not to mention potential losses to the community, considering the extent to which bands operate under the aegis and supervision of social workers as mentioned in Chapter 2.

Yet, seemingly not every form of stealing is devious. In composing *moppies*, for example, musicians use the word 'snatch' to describe the practice of borrowing music snippets from foreign popular music (see Gaulier and Martin 2017), perhaps also minimising the strains of copyright law. Seemingly 'Moppie' composers are aware that "snatching" bits of melody from commercially circulated songs could raise a few problems, although the practice of borrowing pre-dates by many decades the discovery that there are laws and regulations defining artistic property rights' (Gaulier and Martin 2017, p. 168). It seems that the differentiation between stealing acts of musicians from another troupe, and 'snatching' tunes from popular music is one of insider/outsider dynamics. 'Snatching' is allowed insofar as it does not compromise competition, since they are not competing with those outsiders of the international music industry. Presumably, however, 'snatching' the same tune or arrangement that is being used by another troupe is inappropriate, as a self-referential character of the internal dynamics of the music culture.

A carnival troupe may also consist of one or several independent music organisations that also operate, and sometimes cooperate or compete, outside carnival. These organisations often have strong kinship and neighbourhood ties, which means that strengthening the organisation, will likely improve the welfare function of the organisation, yielding positive outcomes in the community. One of the ways in which this solidarity manifests in the band is through what has been described as 'stealing knowledge', where a group of musicians will re-teach the music to those who, for whatever reason, were unable to attend practices. This process describes the intangibility of music sounds and knowledge as a shared value traded as gifts and welfare capital among members of the group.

Interview 4.5: That is what we call stealing, I always tell you are stealing with your eyes. It's free, you can steal with your eyes, so he will go there and steal what that guy is doing. Showing on the fingers with the notes, and he will come here and he will write for the others who are busy with the school (Joel, personal communication, 23/4/2015).

This form of stealing takes place within the troupe rather than between different troupes, in which case it enhances the band's competitive strength, preventing

‘weak links’ among participants, which is presumably why stealing in such cases is encouraged. Whether musicians are snatching knowledge from other local musicians or borrowing musical snippets from copyrighted music sources, musical appropriation have for a very long time granted individuals the right to participate in the modern world, ‘and to adjust to any kind of modernity just invented’ (Martin 2013a, p. 117), as an indigenous practice of those struggling to cope with subjugation.

4.1.4 *The concept of gimmicks*

In klopse culture, a gimmick is a music or performance trick. As in retail marketing, it is designed to stand out from competitors and attract the attention of consumers, although positively associated with the success of producers. Gimmicks are yet another token exchanged outside the economic mainstream, and ‘many coaches assume that the singularity of the gimmick plays a decisive role in the assessment judges make of the performance’ (Gaulier and Martin 2017, p. 164). Effective gimmicks are often those that have not been done before, with the purpose of challenging rivals, drawing the crowd, and impressing the judges. In the context of *moppies* where the concept is most often applied, ‘[t]he gimmick must introduce an element of surprise and make the audience laugh’ (Gaulier and Martin 2017, p. 164), in a sense allowing creative individuals the chance to circumvent financial constraints. Especially when buying (or stealing) musicians is not an option, contestants will ‘study’ their opponents in an effort to outperform rival gimmicks. As one troupe owner said, ‘competitors study you, so whatever you did last year they will embark in challenging you in that manner’, and went on to state that ‘we also study our competitors. (...) We take the feather off their hands and try it, and if it works for us, like 99 % of the time it does work, then we go with it’ (Nassar, personal communication, 28/4/2015). This close scrutiny of rivals, not only keeps teams on their toes as far as competition goes, but it also pushes them to explore creative options, producing new gimmicks every year to increase the troupe’s appeal, which is also a risk considering the extent to which rival captains are able to leverage political influence and handicap stronger teams, especially if rival troupes are unable to outmatch new gimmicks.

With no prior knowledge on klopse, I found it difficult to pinpoint gimmicks, or even understand the concept of gimmicks and what it entails, but as Saif suggests, a gimmick is something new, something to impress rivals and spectators. A few examples are also mentioned by Gaulier and Martin (2017), one of which is described by Anwar Gambeno who takes the famous catch-phrase ‘I said shake it, baby, shake it’ by Elvis Presley and changes it to ‘Shaik Zuma Shaik’ (in reference to the current president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma). Gimmicks, however, are also created outside *moppies*.

Interview 4.6: We had this small little meeting amongst ourselves. We had this idea, we need to come together because we all miss each other,

and we all came together but we didn't come together as brass band players. We came back as just wanting to enjoy us with our cymbals, our jingles [see Glossary], and that is how we started, my man. If I had videos to show you the s* that we made, it would've explained everything to you (...) we started this new, this new culture with regards with cymbals (...) So like, teams would have [jingles], but at that time they didn't know how to make the best of it. For us it was quite simple, we all knew how to hit this, and besides hitting it, you know, it's sometimes... it's not all about the music, keeping in beat, you gotta give it a bit of fashion, you know what I mean? Maybe do a *akeltjie* [Malay slang for 'improvisation'], you know, the *karienkel*, like the guys when they sing they do unnecessary notes, they don't need to do it but they do it sometimes to make it sound nice, the same with the cymbals, you will do some stuff, the beat goes like this ((claps)), but you will do something else, because all of us are doing, it looks in sync. It's brilliant to see it. So we came there, we were crazy, my man. We've done mad stuff, we crawled on the floor, that was my best year, my first year with Santam D6 was my best year of klopse, and with this team ever (Saif, personal communication, 3/5/2015).

In the example above, the gimmick was simply the way and style of playing the jingles, which I describe in Figure 4.1. The jingle gimmick turned out to be a success that year and rival troupes were in the lookout for ways to outperform them on the next season. Now fast forward two carnivals from when Cape Argus District Six Entertainers (D6) introduced the gimmick and one of their rivals, Juvie Boys, did it, as Saif went on to explain.

Interview 4.7: We've introduced this whole jingle thing, our first year it went so crazy, all the teams basically, there were people there watching us and whatever we did they got ideas of it, so we-, like I told you, we were a group of 25, 20 guys, I won't lie to you, Jonathan, the next year Juvie Boys opened, now the next year we were still on our own, the next year all of that 25 men, we've () us into a hundred, more or less a hundred, the following [year] the Juvie Boys opened, and they f*ed us up my man, they came up almost 600 cymbals, my man. 600 cymbals as big as one troupe is (...). They had that amount of cymbals alone, and that's basically where they used our own thing against us. Today it's different, you have cymbals, not everyone knows the beat, not everyone is able to keep the beat, it's not about them trying to improvise on the music, it's more about them trying to just look the look and be pop (Saif, personal communication, 3/5/2015).

As the excerpts showed, gimmicks are conflated with ideas of fashion, with being different and innovative, inducing consumption and making some troupes



Figure 4.1: Jingle pattern as a gimmick. Jingles have roughly three playing positions, indicated by arrows below the notes. Each of the three arrows correspond to the facing position of the palm of the hand that holds the drum. In the first position, marked with an up arrow, the drum is held parallel to the ground slightly above the waist, with the palm facing up. Position 2 is the same, except the palm is facing down. In both positions, the drum strikes the heel of the weak hand from above. In the third position, marked with a left arrow, the drum is held at head level perpendicular to the ground, or above the head when the energy is high. The first three notes are marked as a trill, but given the tempo (110–140 bpm), this is usually a 3-note sequence produced by shaking the drum on both sides with a fast whipping motion of the hand. This playing style of the jingle is a gimmick, a novelty seeking to draw the crowd and challenge rivals.

more appealing than others.³ In every sense, effective gimmicks endow popularity, and as a result of human psychology, supporters end up flocking to the more popular troupes. To a large extent, supporters are the consumers. They add emotion to the competition, cheering and showing their support at the stadium or during road marches, but they also help the team financially, purchasing track suits, hats, uniforms, and attending fund raising events. Helping the team financially is perhaps one reason why bands do not always play music they want to play. Instead, as Munsif said, ‘you must always play music for you supporters’ (personal communication, 17/7/2014). As an indicator of success, popularity builds hierarchy among troupes and becomes another source of competition among troupes. ‘Is stardom the reward for superior talent or does stardom arise because of consumers’ need for a common culture?’ (Adler 2006, p. 9). For Adler (2006), consumption capital is important in that it builds social relations, for instance, when consumers patronise the same artist, or the same troupe, they are more likely to accumulate knowledge on that artist and discuss it with those who also share the same knowledge. ‘If every individual were knowledgeable about a different artist, no discussion would be possible’ (Adler 1985, p. 208).

Gimmicks are thus marketing devices, although not always in a financial sense, to signal the troupe’s popularity and increase their appeal to fans and potential consumers. It is very likely that troupes that meet the prerequisites of successful gimmicks, and are able to introduce novelties more frequently, have better chances of success in the game. In the same way, as social media expands in the minstrel

³ Not in any way related to gimmicks, but Saif also mentioned using the Islamic terms *halal* and *haram* in music contexts. ‘For example, if you are playing your trumpet or you are singing in a choir right, and [the coach] comes pass you and hears you are singing wrong and he says: “My bru, that is *haram*, my bru”. He means you can’t sing like that. You are singing wrong, you are not allowed to sing like that because you are singing s*. So we will just try to implement those words in that kind of way, you know’.

community, so does the potential to fuel self-promotion and attract publicity. It is very possible that the number of Facebook likes and commentaries is reciprocal to competition results, and troupe captains are well aware of this potential. As one troupe owner said, 'we establish a good communication with the people. They are the ones promoting your troupes on the social network [media]' (Nassar, personal communication, 28/4/2015). Competition output and stardom are therefore strongly tied to innovation and popularity, and less so to music talent. Competitive troupe leaders are increasingly relying on branding and marketing strategies, selling a good image of their troupe to expand their troupe's visibility, and on making a careful selection of the musicians they bring in, without whom no gimmicks would be possible.

4.1.5 Township drag artists

Moffies (drag performers) are an interesting case study of South African township artists and their experiences with choreographed shows in a world of increasing commercial opportunities and exploitation. *Moffies* are a subculture of the coloured community, and like carnival musicians, are also struggling to carve opportunities for success in a world in which 'drag queens are frequently raped and murdered' (Swarr 2004, p. 85). 'In South Africa, urban drag artists are paid to drag in gay bars and clubs, while township drag queens perform for community recognition in competitions [e.g. beauty contests] and their daily lives' (Swarr 2004, p. 86). According to Pacey (2014), the first appearance of *moffie* troupes dates back to the 1930s. The *moffie* now 'has become part and parcel of the Carnival, sought after by troupe captains as a "trophy" because of his popularity among the spectators' (Pacey 2014, p. 121). *Moffies* have also acquired a great degree of autonomy in the troupe 'choos[ing] his own persona and performance routine, as well as his own outfit (usually in keeping with the troupe's colours)' (Pacey 2014, pp. 121–122). Ethnographic research accounts that '[d]rag is performed widely in elite white clubs, gay township *shebeens*, and as part of mainstream community celebrations', although certainly not without trials, as society 'is still fraught with enormous social, economic, and political contradictions' (Swarr 2004, p. 74).

The term *moffie* in general describes cross dressed performers and drag queens. *Moffies* are usually transvestites, many of whom are also gay male, and while the etymology of the term is not clear, some scholars suggest the term originates from 'mophrodite', a variation of 'hermaphrodite' (Pacey 2014). In essence, *moffie* is 'a derogatory Afrikaans term for a gay man (more specifically an effeminate gay man)', although still widely used within the gay community as part of their self-identification (Pacey 2014, p. 113).

LGBT rights in the African continent have made limited progress when compared to other parts of the world, with the notable exception of South Africa, which 'currently has one of the most progressive constitutions in the world with regard to entrenching the rights of gays and lesbians' (Pacey 2014, p. 113), and became 'the first [country] in the world to prohibit discrimination against people on the basis

of their sexuality' (van der Wal 2008, p. 36). As a result of national reconciliation, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the first fully democratic elections in 1994, the term 'rainbow nation' has been widely used by politicians and community leaders to assert and celebrate the country's diversity, propelling the rights of previously marginalised minority groups, including the LGTB population, all of which gained significant momentum with the country's new political discourse.

Launched in 1993, the Cape Town Pride Parade (also known as Pride Festival) has since been a major destination for the local and international LGBT community, creating jobs, and bringing a mixture of carnivalesque and LGBT culture to the forefront of the city, which to a lesser extent also extends to the Cape Town Carnival (CTC). Carnivals in general, as van der Wal (2008, p. 119) observes, 'are often used by gay tourism industries to tap into the pink economy, and are marketed as "global gay" mega-events in order to attract consumers'. *Moffies*, however, are generally linked to the working-class coloured community and connected with the broader South African gay culture, which includes an in-group form of communication known the *Gayle* language spoken among the country's urban gay community. As with *Kombaise Afrikaans*, *Gayle* is a code-switching mix of English and Afrikaans words and slang, originally used as a 'secret language' to disguise unapproved communication (see Cage 1999; Cage and Evans 2003). As part of a small number of LGBT and queer languages, the term 'derives from the lexical item Gail, which means "chat" in the language' and developed 'in the "moffie" drag culture of the Cape "coloured" community in the Western Cape in the 1950s', although debate on its origins still exists (Cage 1999, p. 2).

With puzzling relationships of race, gender, class, and sexuality, *moffies* and their experiences as performing drag artists is an interesting case study. Over the years, *moffies* have played a significant role in the making of carnival and are highly valued by troupe captains, acknowledging their charisma and potential to attract popular support. In general, *moffies* command 'a respect which homosexuals are not granted in ordinary society' (Martin 1999, p. 16), and have greater cultural autonomy, although often stereotyped in the performance and allegory of comics. The unique way in which these individuals express sex and gender, however, 'put them at risk for violent attacks' (Swarr 2004, p. 85), also putting their desires for joy and success at stake.

4.2 NEW MUSIC, OLD MONEY

4.2.1 *Enticing players*

If an individual or group have proven to have excelled in past competitions, especially if they were able to win consecutive titles, rival captains will eventually entice them with money and contract offers. This explains why questing for talent is common, and while gigging musicians and service providers are more likely to follow the higher bidder, there are also those who will choose loyalty over money. Another salient observation is that the economic value of a troupe musician is not

necessarily based on music skills. Characteristics like charisma and popularity can also make musicians more attractive to those willing to bid on them. Better connected musicians will often already have an established legion of supporters who will follow them wherever they go, granting them extra bargaining and political power within a troupe and possibly in other social settings as well. In other words, musicians who acquire popularity in the game, and are able to make a 'name in the industry', would have been traded at a lower price had they only been skilled performers.

As I have said, troupes are becoming increasingly reliant on economic power to participate in the game. But provided most members are not in it for money, what strategies do troupe owners use to maximise productivity and keep their teams competitive? One possible answer is that those in charge are glorifying competitions and the potential for music and social achievements, building hopes and selling out promises of prestige and fame in order to instigate musicians to drive their team forward, and perhaps 'fill their pockets with money', in the words of Issam (personal communication, 19/4/2015), in which case competition discourse could well suit profit maximisation. Winning troupes are also more likely to also receive and sustain sponsorship so long as they are able to attract supporters and visibility. Evidently, carnival authorities subscribe to a different view, acknowledging the utility function of carnival that serves to alleviate social and economic burdens in the community. According to a troupe owner, 'there's no financial gains. It's what they call a bottomless pit. If you throw your money in, it doesn't come out again' (Nassar, personal communication, 28/4/2015). On the most basic level, klopse provides food for those who 'come in without having a decent meal on the table' (Nassar, personal communication, 28/4/2015) (see also Footnote 5 on page 131), which if true should make it easier to entice musicians with food and money in exchange for services. For troupe owners and others, competitions provide both cheap entertainment and opportunities for public acknowledgement of status and merits.

Interview 4.8: It's to give them [the community] something, where they don't have to have a pay channel in order to see specific groups perform. They don't have to pay 180 to 250 rand to go to a concert to see somebody (...) but here you are going to see people from your own community, which yes, we imitate the stars or groups out there to the best of our ability, but for the 30 or 40 rand which you pay on the gate, you are going to see people of your community putting in effort, that practices, 365 days 24/7 in order to put a spectacular show for the masses of Cape Town, be it in the street parading or be it in the Athlone stadium. (...) You win the respect, you win the warmth and the love of people's hearts that becomes fan of you as a team and also they respect the effort and hard work that you put in to put up a spectacle for them at the stadium where the competition is [held]

(Nassar, personal communication, 28/4/2015).

Some consultants suggest that welfare discourse can potentially dispel claims that troupe owners are growing on the basis of cheap labour, claiming that while transaction costs are often disclosed, profit margins are not, or at least vary considerably depending on the person to whom the question is asked, perhaps falsely accounting for the value of production. But as the chairperson of one of the Carnival Boards argued, 'how can you have a troupe of 300 to 400 thousand rand and not be clued-up with business?' (Ron, personal communication, 30/7/2014).⁴ There are, of course, some speculation over how much a troupe owner might actually profit from his troupe, and some consultants suggest that the numbers are high among Super League troupes⁵, enough to secure livelihood without relying on traditional forms of employments, while others contend that the stakes are too high to maintain financial stability, aside perhaps from the few more well-established troupes, and those in charge of running the event, controlling ticket sales and government subsidy, although 'it seems likely that there has always been some potential for capital gain by other interests' (Baxter 2001, p. 98), and that 'some troupe captains are also gang leaders exploiting the economic potential of their troupe' (Martin 1999, p. 44). Baxter (2001, p. 98) also acknowledges '[t]he shift [towards the end of the 1970s] from unpaid amateurs to professional performers demand[ing] substantial financial outlay by the captains', and 'increas[ing] necessity of securing a larger paying troupe membership (to pay for the band's hire), and thus the growing emphasis on *winning* the competition, not merely taking part (in order to attract the members)' (Baxter 2001, p. 98, emphasis added). Presently, not much has changed.

4.2.2 'No pay no play'

In the field, money and promises were frequently at the forefront of discussions. On the last day of competition, when trophies were presented after a long day first *jolling* in Mitchells Plain and later competing at the Athlone Stadium, troupe members sat inside buses in the parking lot of the stadium waiting for their final *jol* in Bo-Kaap, but the bus did not leave. It was late at night and the stadium had already closed. We were told that the captain's wife had locked the keys inside the car with the money of the driver inside, who then refused to leave. As we waited in the crowded bus, members were getting impatient with no real position of what was going on. Members were wanting to *jol*, but the delay continued. There was still plenty of excitement inside the bus, and plenty of joking and poking fun too, but our energy was quickly draining. Those who had been using ecstasy all day were probably suffering the most at that point, but were trying to keep up anyway.

⁴ See also van der Wal (2009, p. 92) and Martin (1999, pp. 12–13, 14–15, 19).

⁵ 'They make tons of money. If you can tell me how does one who is unemployed, who doesn't work, how do you manage to maintain the lifestyle that you are living if you are not working?' (Issam, personal communication, 19/4/2015).

In fact, we were all holding on together. Most of us were thirsty. Others needed to use the toilet, but we were all stranded for one or two more hours until the *jol* was finally cancelled.

From the band master's perspective, however, the story was different. He told me that YSBB was not paid the amount agreed and hence refused to play. In other words, the *jol* was cancelled because without a brass band there is no *jol*. 'No pay no play', was their motto, he said. In an outburst of discontentment, another consultant confessed: 'we've reached a point when no one, any musician also, he won't play if you don't pay him. He won't play, but it never used to be a paying game. So that channel has already being exploited too far, no paying in today's time- no pay means no play' (Issam, personal communication, 19/4/2015). The band master went on to explain that on that day, he had gone to the captain's house to pick up the money, but the money agreed was not there. The captain then told him over the phone that Faruq, one the directors, had his money and would give it to him at the stadium. But Faruq apparently showed up with less money than what he was supposed to pay, and that was the reason the bus was stranded for so long. These band members were in a different bus, and I never really saw the discussion from where I was. YSBB musicians then decided to walk to Bridgetown where many of them lived, and from there, the band master 'washed his hands' and through a joint decision with his musicians, agreed to break up with D6.

Issues around money are not uncommon. On 16 December 2015, in Bo-Kaap, competing troupes gathered to measure themselves against others, and instigate fright on rival teams through a public display of unity and skill. This event is known as *Voorsmakie*, a mock parade held annually on 16 December during a public holiday in South Africa (Reconciliation Day), focusing on the quality of the brass band and its ability to draw the crowd. It also serves as a means to advertise the team in social media, aimed at increasing the number of supporters and subsequent selling of uniforms, all of which are increasingly important to the success of the troupe.

As early as 8 am, troupe members begin gathering under the trees facing a local Cape Malay restaurant, Bismillah, as they wait for others to arrive, most of whom come from township and working-class areas in the Greater Cape Town. 'For some, this meant traveling over forty kilometers, squeezed with eight to ten people into small sedans and *bakkies* [pick-up trucks]' (Inglese 2016, p. 90). As a legacy of the GAA, which propelled the dispersion of Black communities, micro-migrations are still a common reality among township residents, amounting to the largest expense in the team's budget along with the payment of the band, as buses need to be hired by the troupe's executive to transport its members during the season. Each bus costs R 3,500.00 and the band alone can cost between R 30,000.00 to R 80,000.00 depending on the size of the team. Band musicians are usually paid between R 150.00 and R 700.00 per day of work, while experienced musicians are sometimes paid up to R 1,000.00, not including singers, solo artists, hired choirs and music coaches.

The day is hot and I gather under the shade with a few trombonists as they ‘cool down’ drinking Irish whisky. I begin chatting with Bradly, who had been playing with D6 for the past 7 years. He explained that D6 had a large band in the past called Impromptu, with around 160 members. But as a result of financial disagreements, the band broke up with D6 leaving some musicians behind, himself included, who chose to continue playing for D6 instead. With a relatively small band (but with a ‘big sound’ as they sometimes say), D6 was able to ‘rise from the ashes’, as Bradly described, and win last year’s competition. Since its inception in 2005, D6 has been a ‘dangerous’ competitor in the Super League and members of the team are proud to boast over their titles. As a result of trophies and popularity, members of Impromptu have started making their way back to D6. Breakups as the ones I described are common, making it difficult to track genealogies and the movement of musicians across troupes. In the case of D6, the reason for breaking up was that Impromptu’s former band coach, the middleman, who is now involved with Juvie Boys, was apparently underpaying his musicians. Indeed, transactions among troupe owners, band masters and musicians are still largely informal and unregulated, through which different arrangements and agreements can be made. Normally, however, it is the band master who pays his musicians from the money received from the troupe’s executive. At this point the band is called to meet at the *klopskamer* and we walk up Pentz street to gather with the others as the team makes its final warm up before our first procession down the cobblestone roads of Bo-Kaap.

4.3 ESCAPE FROM MENIAL LABOUR

It is true that many employed participants hold professional qualifications, although not always ascribing to middle-class values, but the majority are involved in low wage menial labour, and in general have grim prospects of finding anything better. Troupes, on the other hand, bring individuals closer in more fulfilling environments, in contrast to the work space of low-income industrial workers whose creativity is not often valued or needed, although not always outside divisions that characterise modern society. For many participants, work life is not an occasion of pride, which is why glamorising music achievements has become so crucially vital, and far more effective than glamorising factory work, as a channel to subvert and brush off signs of weaknesses and frustrations. Indeed, many employed participants with whom I spoke feel unmotivated and often complain about their day jobs. Some work full-time or part-time as electricians, tailors, cabinet-makers, welders, drivers, salespersons, construction workers, musicians and a wide range of formal and informal jobs. But unlike their formal employment, klopse provides them with opportunities to be noticed by those around them, to express themselves creatively, and be acknowledged by their input and creativity beyond their monthly paycheck.

Historically, producers in industrial capitalist societies shifted ‘from the centre

to the periphery of the productive process', 'replac[ing] subject-centred skills with objective principles of mechanical functioning' (Ingold 2000, p. 289). Music competitions, on the other hand, provide ways around the limitations of menial labour by helping to fulfil certain emotional needs. In the case of *safela*, a form of praise poem competition in South Africa, blacks found ways to humanise and offset the oppressive conditions by which industrial miners endured (Coplan 1985). The main purpose of *safela*, according to Coplan (1985, p. 20), 'is self-transformation; heroic redefinition as a person capable of coping with the alien industrial world of the mine in the service of traditional social values'. Likewise, in the case of klopse, as one consultant said, 'it's not about bragging, it's about confidence, about being proud (...) it makes you more confident, it builds you up (...) people will congratulate you' (Ilias, personal communication, 5/4/2015). His statement once again validates the notion that carnival provides a framework for recognition which appears remarkably scarce in their work lives.

Klopse competitions, therefore, have become a vital component in the lives of industrial workers, offering a framework for self and social development, restoring self-esteem and overcoming certain vulnerabilities. As Ilias said, 'if we lose certain items, it makes us stronger for the new season. (...) Losing the comics to Juvie Boys [rival troupe], it gave us the boost to prove ourselves that we are the carnival kings' (personal communication, 5/4/2015). In many ways, competitions function as 'social equalisers' (Gunderson and Barz 2000) and provide important life skills, and learning communities through collaborative and creative arrangements, in ways that fulfil certain human needs and desires, and offset shameful impressions of failure and poverty. Through competitive ritual performances, klopse practitioners are finding motivation and recognition outside conventional workplace. What else would explain the efforts of men and women to commute long distances and attend long hours of music practice after a long day of work? In a way, troupe members are striving to excel and achieve something bigger than what menial labour can offer, and are enticed by recognition and other emotional rewards by participating in music and other forms competition as part of their social calendars.

* * *

In retrospect, much of the interpersonal face-to-face relationships occurred around competitive rituals, with increased participation from young men, those who are beginning to form families as they struggle to become breadwinners. Coincidentally, these young men and musicians are also among the group with the highest death rates in the country. Among competitive rituals performed in the community, street football and touch rugby were perhaps the most common, at least in Bo-Kaap, with many young men and boys participating in self-organised tournaments. Other forms of competitions include brass band, Christmas Band (Bruinders 2012, 2013), Malay Choir (van der Wal 2009; Gaulier and Martin 2017), and Kaapse Klopse competitions (Martin 1999; Inglese 2016). In all of these instances, trophies were

always displayed proudly on social media and in their living rooms, boasting over what they have chosen to value as being significant in their lives, as an extension of other affairs in the larger society, which for many of them are perhaps too distant to even care about.

I was especially surprised with the number of competitive rituals also held at religious gatherings, like the one at the Sheikh Yusuf Kramat in Macassar during Easter break. Most of the activities organised for children involved some form of competition and trophy rewards. Adults also competed in walkathons, touch rugby and tug of war. Domino competitions in Salt River, dice gambling, karaoke, and playing board games at local barber shops were also common, but perhaps the most relevant of these were rugby tournaments, which made up an important part of their social calendar alongside annual carnival and religious activities. During the later stages of fieldwork, following the carnival season, I was able to attend some of the games played by Bo-Kaap's rugby team, Schotschekloof Walmers Rugby Club (skw). I noticed, for instance, that whenever skw played against their 'own people'⁶, like Primroses, a coloured team from Mitchells Plain, violence and rivalry *increased*. When they were not playing against 'their own', like university teams where the majority of players were white, violence and rivalry *decreased*. The fact that rivalry increases within members of the group is important. For Saif, who also attended these games in support of the team from Bo-Kaap, 'it's like you have something to prove' (personal communication, 3/5/2015).

Interview 4.9: The relevance of that game was a [local] derby. Like I told you, basically (...) where two coloured, or two Muslim teams would actually meet, because why of us being separated by particular leagues in the past (...) You've also witnessed some fights which I was telling you about. That is basically because of the rivalry, you know. Within our coloured community there's lots of... We are a very talented, not necessarily community but () Cape town itself, you know. We have people that pride themselves, there's lots of clubs and stuff like that even though some organisations, maybe for the klopse, we would come together representing one team or something like that (...) when it comes to rugby it's totally different. The guys from Mitchells Plain, they have their team. The guys from Bo-Kaap, we have our team, our (). So although we know each other, the importance to win each other is very important. We take it because you basically get bragging rights, you understand. So like this game we won yesterday we would have

⁶ 'Like always, fights will break out because that's just how it is, playing against your own, I wouldn't say [your] own race, but your own kind of people. You know, the coloured people (...) Our people I refer to the coloured people (...) I mean coloured guys who would belong to the klopse and stuff, coloured guys who would also belong to rugby teams and all of that and into the community. That's how I would refer to our people. And our people, even the team that we played yesterday, Primroses, they are our people as well. They are a Muslim community as well. And at the end of the day we might fight, but tomorrow we're gonna be friends again.' (Saif, personal communication, 3/5/2015).

bragging rights over those guys until the next time we play them. And we only play them once a year. So we have bragging rights for one year. And that is exactly why (Saif, personal communication, 3/5/2015).

Once again, bragging rights triggering social relations and keeping participants engaged. Like klopse, local rugby matches also provide communal platforms for social engagement and opportunities for individuals to show-off and prove themselves, aimed at steering their well-being and carving out opportunities for success. Locally, empirical evidence shows that competitive rituals occur outside the social and economic mainstream, and that rivalry increases within members of the group in the form of local derbies. In team sports, in particular football, aspects of territoriality are linked to the likelihood of achieving victory (Bale 2002). The author discusses how in local derby games, teams that are geographically closer have better chances of winning than those located furthest away, supposedly because a larger audience of supporters have more power over their ability to influence the players. This notion of proximity also resonates with local rugby games in Cape Town, although perhaps linked to cultural rather than (or in addition to) geographic factors. I have not sufficient evidence to comment on whether culturally distant teams have better chances of winning, but it appears that cultural proximity is linked to an increase in rivalry both among teams and supporters.

Some consultants also suggest that competitions are symptoms of deeper divisions. That is, 'how is a child from an impoverished Cape Flats community, who doesn't have sometimes a meal for the day, how can he compete right now with the child from a very upmarket elite rugby school?' (Adeela, personal communication, 10/4/2015). Under these circumstances, in-group competitions provide opportunities to increase mutual support, improve themselves under the excuse of competition, generate resource, and perhaps circumvent socio-economic challenges. A recent meta-analysis on ethnic and racial identity (ERI) among minority adolescents, for example, suggests that 'ERI are more often than not positively associated with psychosocial functioning – directly or indirectly – in adolescence among ethnic minority youth' (Rivas-Drake, Seaton, Markstrom, Quintana, Syed, Lee, Schwartz, Umaña-Taylor, French and Yip 2014, p. 46). Based on my observations, ethnic identity in working-class coloured culture is twofold. On the one hand, it weakens their vulnerabilities to social challenges, as it builds intra-ethnic cohesion. On the other hand, however, it leaves fewer opportunities for cross-ethnic socialisation, and perhaps even creates antagonism between groups as a result of social closure.

For Seekings (2007, 2011) and others, post-apartheid divisions are symptoms of socio-economic inequalities, worsened by the weight and legacy of apartheid. It is not a coincidence that, in the case of rugby, a large number of coloured South Africans still support New Zealand and other foreign teams. Historically, this self-identification with Black teams occur

Interview 4.10: because they [white Afrikaners] told us the Blacks couldn't play rugby, but when the Māoris [All Blacks] [New Zealand's rugby union] came here and had to stay in separate hotels and they played against the Springboks [South Africa national rugby union team], they became our heroes because they were coloured people winning these white people. It's like Hitler telling the *herrenrasse* [master race, describing Aryan superiority in Nazi ideology] was the best sport. Before the Olympics when they were beaten by the Blacks of America, it's the same idea, and today you'll see that half, I'm just telling [you] about rugby now, sports, half of South Africa is supporting a foreign team, but there is history behind it (Kamil, personal communication, 13/4/2015).

In effect, despite the fact that whites still hold a great deal of privilege in the country, supporting a black foreign team is a political statement. Likewise, as with current trends to decolonise institutions (see #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall), sports are a vital component in the construction of self-images and self-making projects of Blacks. After all, how will a coloured child see himself or herself when all of his rugby heroes are white, outnumbered by blacks in a country where the majority of people, like him, are black?

* * *

In this Chapter, an attempt was made to demonstrate how troupes' resilience and self-reliance are once again being put on trial, with external forces and carnival leaders gaining increasing control to manipulate music productions and monetise the event by tying musicians to financial obligations. In a sense, carnival participants are being forced-fed commercial exchange, advertising, and deceitful strategies to attract potential buyers, perhaps as their enactment of progress and the costly existence of consumption and modernity. Yet, while some musicians have managed to draw their sustenance from *klopse*, largely as wage labourers and exchanged as service providers, the majority of participants are having to adjust compliantly to the changes and growing demands of the game, with troupes and the music culture becoming increasingly dependent on larger economic structures for their survival. In the next chapter, I will provide initial interpretations of *klopse* music and its relationship with social processes.

5 *Interpretations of klopse music*

ETHNOMUSICOLOGISTS STUDY musical cultures around the world, focusing on musical practices and their relation to other facets of culture and society. A central purview of ethnomusicological thought and conduct is description and interpretation of music from the social and cultural context of those who make it. Often, interpretations are the result of embodied and interactive experiences in a particular place and time, which is why ethnomusicologists maintain a close dialogue with the social sciences and other ethnographic disciplines. In these types of study, researchers then look at how musical patterns both inform and are informed by social and economic patterns within the cultural framework of societies. This approach comes with the realisation that musics ‘are not always strictly musical’, and ‘that no musical style has “its own terms”’: its terms are the terms of its society and culture, and of the bodies of the human beings who listen to it, and create and perform it’ (Blacking 1973, p. 25). Music then both reflects and creates ‘socially accepted patterns’, representing the resources available in society and the social setting within which musics are created, performed, and often times contested. Not all members of society, however, have access to the same resources, which is one reason why music patterns vary greatly across cultures, and across the social spectrum of societies, exposing the ways in which musical taste and affiliation articulate differences among individuals and groups. This perhaps also explains the historical association of black Africans with drum and vocal music, coloureds with brass and choral music, and whites with electric instruments and electronic music.

As with most other traditional styles, klopse is a learned behaviour, taught from one generation to the next, and constantly evolving from the social and economic context of those who participate. Consider, for example, some of the social dances and bodily expressions in the performance (e.g. Figure 6.1b). They are certainly not stiff like traditional Irish dance, but unlike Brazilian funk and its assertion of sexuality, klopse is more reserved, with bodies usually covered from neck to toe, although still holding a great deal of freedom and law-defying attitudes. These expressions also convey transgressive attitudes, silliness, rejection of middle-class values, and discrepancies with the fortunate few, reflecting the astute humour of taxi *guardtjies* (Footnote 5 on page 50) and street hawkers, with their sharp voices

and caps turned sideways, reinforcing the disdain of some respectable coloureds towards klopse, including members of the Malay Choir and Christmas Bands.

Music patterns, and how these patterns are conceived, in many ways reflect local needs, attitudes, and resources available in society (i.e. brass instruments are generally cheaper, easier to play, and require no electric amplification, see Reily and Brucher 2013), as well as how and why members organise themselves musically, and distinguish themselves from other music communities. For many practitioners, klopse is as an opportunity to escape low-wage menial labour and a place to carve out opportunities for success (as one consultant told me, carnival provides one of the few opportunities for the son to be proud of the father), but it also replicates similar structures and concerns of the broader society in which power held by a small minority exerts outright control over culture and the social structure, shifting independent musicians into the industrial system, with more and more musicians willing to rent their services. The more I spoke with participants, the more I realised that much of their frustrations stem from losing control over their music, being increasingly subservient to power holders, and carnival becoming increasingly centralised. The music culture is nonetheless still managing to adapt and thrive, and have so for a very long time, perhaps because of its ability to forge deep emotional bonds, opportunities to dream of a different society and congregate around a common need for joy. After all, in the end, even if '[u]topia is impossible', 'the ongoing struggle toward it is not' (Mitchell 2003, p. 235).

As much uncontrolled and insurgent as troupes appear during processions, they are all carefully planned and managed, with bookkeeping chores and contract negotiations held during the year. Over the years, business and politics have been slowly encroaching into the structures of competitions, and privately owned troupes have become an attractive means of engaging in productive labour. In his recollection of troupes' performances in the past, one Bo-Kaap resident contends that a lot has changed in terms of the commodification of troupes and their relationship with sponsors. He argues that with the surge of competitions, the need for funding increased with additional costs for 'busing people in' and out of stadiums 'week in and week out'.

Interview 5.1: Prize money needed to increase, things became a lot more competitive and seemingly it became big business. What I also saw in the last number of years is that business started sponsoring particular troupes (...) I have photographs of suddenly people walking around with business etiquettes, you know, with business logos and I was like, that never used to be the [case], you never had a troupe sponsored by a particular company and showing their branding (Jacob, personal communication, 23/4/2015).

The problem, it seems, is not the relationship with money per se, which is

for sure much needed, but the increasing dependence on funders, including governments, drug lords, and sponsors, to avoid parades and competitions from drowning. This is to say that for those who are excluded from governing decisions, music is not always a matter of choice. More often than not, participants are told when and where to play and in general have no control over musical repertoire, instruments, or means of transportation, having to either rent or buy themselves into the troupe. According to Baxter (2001, p. 88), '[t]he introduction of commercial sponsorship as early as 1906, marked the onset of what many participants felt to be an insidious involvement by outside business interests'. The need for increasing financial input means that members are also vying for money, with a small number of people dominating the activities and tying musicians to contract and wage relations, 'who then can buy themselves into top positions on all other rank dimensions because money is highly convertible in a capitalist society – if you have money to convert, that is' (Galtung 1969, p. 171). Maybe I am being naive to think that troupes organised themselves without authority, although there is certainly evidence suggesting it as the path forward, but either way, it seems, klopse music encapsulates a long story of defiance, struggle, and freedom. In this chapter, I will suggest that klopse music is an embodied experience of emancipation, closely linked to the history of slavery, and a means of forging opportunities in a world of scarce and depleting resources.

5.1 A TENTATIVE MUSICOLOGY OF THE GHOEMA

Bearing witness of struggles of control, money, success, and rights to parade, with troupes shutting down and new ones being created, *ghoema* music has seen it all. The term *ghoema* is difficult to define, but in general refers to a typical Cape sound present in the music of the *Kaapse Klopse*, Christmas Bands, and Malay Choirs, and is almost 'ubiquitous in the music of the Cape' (Martin 1999, p. 172), capturing the mood and essence of New Year festivities in Cape Town.¹

5.1.1 A 'beat' of freedom

In its simplest definition, the *ghoema* beat is the underlying rhythmic formula and heartbeat of *ghoema* music. As with most creole rhythms, the beat is difficult to represent using Western music notation, in part due to subtle accents, variations, and the relaxed way of playing the beat, with parts of the rhythm being neither duple nor triple in feel. Figure 5.1 is my attempt at sketching a rough transcription of the basic one-bar groove played by the *gummy*, which is felt in two or most usually four beats per measure. One distinguishing characteristic of the beat is an emphasis on the second quaver. It appears that for the majority of players this is where the cycle actually begins, and supposedly how the beat is meant to be felt, although not everyone concurs with the same interpretation. Rhythms and

¹ Cf. also Martin (2013a, pp. 347–349) and Gaulier and Martin (2017, pp. 154–157).

sticking vary greatly, even among players of the same troupe, but the inflection and sound of the beat is often similar, and '[w]hat may sound at first like a trifling rhythmic pattern generates extremely powerful sensations' (Gaulier and Martin 2017, p. 154). The sound also evokes an embodied response, 'a particular kinetic practice' (Inglese 2016, p. 101), in which members are drawn into the rhythm from head to toe, and into altered states of consciousness.

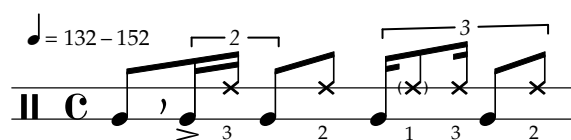
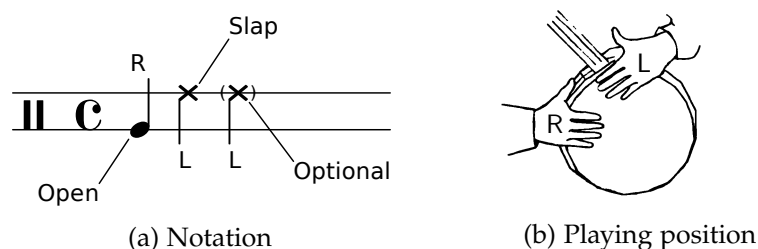


Figure 5.1: *Ghoema* beat transcription and short analysis (see legend on page 119). This is the main pattern played by the *gummy*, referred as *ghoema* beat or calypso. For other instruments in the ensemble, see notation on page 122. The breath mark indicates a micro pause after the first quaver (beat 1), followed by a subsequent contraction of the two notes preceding the second beat. Number markings below the slap strokes indicate the volume at which these notes are played, 3 being the loudest. Tuplet markings indicate my hearing of the rhythm, structured as a 2-3 *son clave* (for listening instructions, see Tracks 1 and 2 on page 177).

The representation of the beat is a mere summary of the different patterns played by my colleagues in the troupe. In most cases, there appears to be some redundancy of the patterns, almost mimicking the bass drum, which I presume occurred with the introduction of marching percussion in the 1950s and 1960s, in particular the bass drum, and loudest in the band (see bass drum line, Figure 5.4). There are also countless variations to the pattern, most of which make minute references to beat one and provide deceptive clues about the metre. This means that without prior reference to the music and harmonic changes, it is difficult to tell where the beat actually begins and where it ends, although it became easier to grasp when splitting the pattern in two, as a 2-3 *son clave*, with the beat commencing on the '2' side as shown in Figure 5.1.

The drum. There is certainly great respect for the *gummy* among participants, in part because of its legacy in the history of the *Kaapse Klopse*. The *gummy* is a lightweight barrel-shaped and single-headed membranophone, positioned horizontally, similar to *doumbeks* and *darbukas*, although held with a strap over the shoulder, and played with both hands. Similar to traditional South Indian drumming, rhythms are played in a linear fashion, one note after the other. With one of the forearms resting over the shell of the drum, the top hand normally plays slap or closed strokes (stopping the head from vibrating), leaving open strokes to the hand below (see Figure 5.2b). With the constant rubbing of skin and sweat against the drum's shell, especially during long parades, skin irritation eventually develops in the forearm. To prevent this from happening, players sometimes wrap their forearm with a piece of fabric cut from a tight long sleeve shirt, enough to cover the contact area and avoid the damage.

Figure 5.2: *Gummy* legend

Traditionally made from repurposed small wine casks made with wooden staves slightly wider in the middle, and herd skin (springbok) nailed over one of the two open ends, the drum is usually made in two sizes, either 10" tenor or 12" bass, and can take up to 2 weeks to build. Different from older *gummies* (Figure 5.3), modern ones are significantly lighter and smaller in size. Players will often use the drum to push those in front forward during parades, and engrave their names on one of the slats on the outside shell of the drum. *Gummies* are still handmade and come with no tuning rods attached or synthetic heads, with staves joined with glue rather than metal hoops or other traditional means. When the weather is humid, drummers might gather around a bonfire to raise the pitch, or simply rub the hand against the surface of the head, but from my experience the drum is usually played 'as is', with no tuning at all, producing mellower tones at night and sharper tones during the day.

Etymologically, *ghoema* evokes the East African word *ngoma* (drum) (Ranger 1975), and the name of a Khoe musical bow (*gora*), 'as well as *g!omah*, the name of a braced musical bow played by the Jul'hoansi Bushmen' (Martin 2013a, p. 352). It might also simply be an onomatopoeia of the sound produced by striking the drum, similar to tam-tam, gom-gom, or gong, a resonating metal plate widely used in the traditional music of Java and Bali in Indonesia and other parts of South East Asia from where much of the slave population was brought. This is a plausible theory, especially considering that each syllable of the word (*goom-ma*) matches the number of strokes in the beat (*goom*: open tone, long sound; *ma*: closed tone, short sound), and that vocalisation of rhythm is a common use case for transmitting musics of oral tradition. The word can even be sung over the beat. For example: *goo8. ma16 goo8 ma8* (where 8. = dotted quaver; 16 = semiquaver; and 8 = quaver). The root word is also present in many Bantu languages, often referring to concepts of dance, music, and drum, bearing testimony of the creole origins of the rhythm, and tying the *ghoema* to slavery and the creole history of the Cape. Taliep Petersen, in fact, a well-known South African singer and composer 'explains that "You can compare the birth of *ghoema* music in the Cape with the creation of blues in the United States, or the samba in Latin America, or Creole music in the Caribbean. All these types of music have on thing in common: slavery"' (Hutchinson 2006, p. 91).

Most likely as a result of slave trade across the Atlantic, the concept of *clave*



Figure 5.3: Single head barrel drum (*ghoeema* or *gummy*). Original instrument collected by Percival Kirbt in Cape Town, ca. 1939. Now at the Museum van de Caab at Solms Delta, in Franschhoek. Photo by the author, 29 April 2015.

or timeline may well be a legacy of slave culture and African music, present in secular genres in Cuba like rumba, and sacred genres in Brazil like congo and other rhythms (*toques*) of Candomblé. *Clave* translates as key or keystone in Spanish. It is also a pair of hardwood sticks for playing the underlying rhythmic structure that ‘holds’ the music in place, ‘a poignant metaphor for a community that still bears the scars of apartheid dislocation’ (Bruinders 2012, p. 2). In klopse, the 2-3 *clave* pattern² is always nested within the calypso beat (Figure 5.1) and difficult to dissociate from it. This rhythmic timeline feel is similar to those of other creole music traditions of African origin, in which the timeline may not always be played, but is always felt (see also Toussaint et al. 2002, 2003). In fact, when referring to the calypso, a local musician makes a similar observation when he says ‘although we don’t play that all the time, it’s there, it’s like the *clave* ((sings *son clave*)) someone doesn’t have to play, but you can feel it’ (Marco, personal communication, 16/4/2015). Marco is a well-known drummer in the Western Cape, involved in both traditional and contemporary South African music, including klopse music, and works closely with the Solms Delta Trust in Franschhoek. When asked about the calypso beat, he attributes its origin to colonial Brazil, in particular from a rhythmic similarity between calypso and Brazilian *baião* (Figure 5.5a), both of which originate from Dutch colonies around the same period and are closely aligned with the *tresillo* timeline, as a diasporic rhythmic formula worldwide supposedly connecting people of African descent.

Interview 5.2: If you listen to the *ghoeema* beat, it comes from Brazil. If we go back, way back- this is my opinion, I’ve done some research on it. If you go back when the Dutch came with the slaves, [and] brought these guys, they went through Rio and brought along these slaves and they brought also the songs and the sounds, the rhythms with them because if you go back, the Africans were taken to the Americas, North, Central, South, to do work there, the Angolans and the Nigerians. If these rhythms were developed there, like the salsa rhythms, those are

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all African rhythms that got developed further there, so the *ghoema* beat in particular is, for me, similar to the *baião* rhythm ((sings the rhythm)). That's the bass, although we don't play that all the time. It's there, it's like the *clave* ((sings *son clave*)) someone doesn't have to play but you can feel it ((plays the *clave* again)). That's one variation, I mean there's others, the ((again)) it's there. For me, for my research that I done, because I checked where samba, the bossa nova, to check where we were similar and to me the closest one was the *baião*. So I'm figuring out this, because the Khoisan didn't play *ghoema*, they had their own thing you know, so that had to come with the slaves and the stuff that influenced. Take me to Australia and I'll still be able to play the *ghoema*, so people brought along these things and they played it, obviously on different types of drums, the *ghoema* drums were made of old (oak) wine barrels. [It] can't be used anymore, so they put it to use, covered it with a (herd) skin and that's where that drum comes from. There's a lot of variations of the beat, but because we're exposed a lot to people's cultures and music we can put those influences, which is a good thing (Marco, personal communication, 16/4/2015).

In his conception, the *ghoema* represents the mixing of several cultures, in particular slaves from Africa and the East, who gathered in the open air to play music outside the confines of their work, sometimes imitating or mocking their 'masters', and was thus central to leisure activities at the Cape since the early stages of colonialism. '[T]he *ghoema* beat may have [thus] "imposed" itself as the basic pattern of Cape Town popular musics because it represented the smallest common denominator which appeared in overlapping areas where the diverse rhythmic sensibilities and practices of the people who coexisted at the Cape came together' (Martin 2013a, p. 353). In an earlier publication, Martin (1999, p. 172) observes that 'when the beats marked by banjos, walking sticks, bones or tambourines are added to the *ghoema* beat, lies a substratum of African (including Khoikhoi) rhythms', which also contains elements of Indian and Arabic music. This unique rhythmic pattern therefore encapsulates the coming together of people and their endeavour to coexist and live peacefully together. But while the origins of the beat are mixed, present producers and consumers of this music are largely bound by ethnic and kinship ties, exposing their discrepancies with the larger society, and ways of coping with everyday patterns of exploitation.

Klopse beat. Figure 5.4 is again a rough a representation of the *klopse* beat (or *ghoema* beat) as a transcription of the basic patterns played by percussionists in the troupe (see Track 2 on page 177 for listening instructions). Where appropriate, I have added two lines per staff. One below for the dominant hand and one above for the opposite hand. Notes in parenthesis are optional, which means they are not always played. The breath mark indicates where the pattern normally begins for

The figure shows a musical score for six instruments: Cymbal, Jingle A, Jingle B, Gummy, Snare, and Bass Dr. The Cymbal part is a single note on a whole note. Jingle A and Jingle B are played together, with Jingle A having a trill-like figure. Gummy, Snare, and Bass Dr. all play a similar rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. Arrows below the notes indicate the facing position of the palm holding the drum.

Figure 5.4: Klopse beat transcription score. Notes in parenthesis are optional. Arrows indicate the facing position of the palm holding the drum.

those instruments, as well as a micro pause, which is more easily felt than actually heard. The clash cymbal is a pair of crash cymbals held in either hand with a piece of strap, generally played on the offbeats along with jingles and *tamariens*.

The jingle is a headless tambourine, usually 12" with round wooden frame and small pairs of metal jingles around it, and normally held with the dominant hand. In the example, the jingle part is not as simple and requires some explanation. There are roughly three playing positions indicated with arrows below the notes, which affect not only the visual aspect of the performance, but also the sound. Each of the three arrows represent the facing position of the palm of the hand that holds the drum. In the first position, marked with an up arrow, the drum is held parallel to the ground slightly above the waist, with the palm facing up. Position 2 is the same, except the palm is facing down. In both positions, the drum strikes the heel of the weak hand from above, and because it is parallel to the ground, the jingles produce a softer/crisper sound, normally played on the verse of the song. In the third position, marked with a left arrow, the drum is held at head level perpendicular to the ground, or above the head when the energy is high. In this position, the jingles are louder, hence often played on the chorus. The first three notes of the jingles can be interpreted as a trill, but given the tempo range (ca. 120–150 bpm), this is usually a 3-note sequence produced by shaking the drum on both sides with a fast whipping motion of the hand. Both tom and snare drummer (and tenor drummer, when there is one) are the busiest drummers in the band, and together they play a large number of one or two-bar fills and variations throughout the song.

There are about 70 musicians in the brass band, including trumpets, trombones, saxophones and sometimes tubas/sousaphones. The main melody is normally played by the trumpets accompanied by trombones and tubas. Marching drums include 1 (sometimes 2) bass drums, 1 tom, 1 snare and 1 (sometimes 2) clash

cymbals. The percussion section includes about 15 *gummies*, 15 *tamariens*, 30 jingles, and a few whistles (the same used by referees), maracas and temple blocks. As far as melody goes, present-day klopse music is a collection of radio songs, British or American film soundtracks, TV musical comedies and popular tunes in general. Some of the songs played during my time in the field include ‘Paparazzi’ by Lady Gaga, ‘Flashdance... What a Feeling’ from the film *Flashdance*, ‘Chandelier’ by Sia, ‘One Moment in Time’ by Whitney Houston, ‘Love Is in the Air’ by John Paul Young, to name a few. Klopse is thus multigenerational and most people can relate to its repertoire. Yet, as with the Cape Jazz, what makes *ghoema* different is the ‘twist’, ‘that rhythmic feel’.

Interview 5.3: There’s something about the minstrel carnival, it’s teaching hundreds of young people to (rudimentally) play an instrument. Maybe they just play three chords, but you know what, they’re playing, we need those laboratories, they become laboratories for musicianship and people even with their 3 chords rudimentary understanding of music are making some music. They do their own orchestration, they put their own little twist to things and they always had, most of these musicians play by ear, they can’t read but they can play because they got a fine tuned ear for certain things, and they can make that *Kaapse ding* [Cape thing], they can change their cool song into something peculiar little ((whistles)) fake, you give a little Cape Town flavour to it (Jacob, personal communication, 23/4/2015).

This idea of ‘twist’ and ‘making it their own’ is important. It shows participants’ ability to not only appropriate musics from overseas, but also ‘transform them into something local, demonstrating coloured people’s contribution to a variegated modernity by inventing something new: a “ghoema pop music”’ (Gaulier and Martin 2017, p. 152), in which international success is then repurposed into local success by local artists.

5.1.2 ‘Beating’ the shackles

Historical research and archives trace the *ghoema* back to the history of slavery, when slaves gathered on the streets and at picnics to sing *ghoemaliedjes* (*ghoema* drum songs). These creole songs were the result of several cultures that converged at the Cape, including those brought from India, Indonesia, Mozambique, West Africa and Europe. Music in Cape Town is thus profoundly diverse. From playing with Cape Argus District Six Entertainers (D6), I was able to distinguish two main rhythms present in *ghoema* music, one is the calypso (Figure 5.1) and the other is the klopse *jol* (Figure 5.5c). These were the terms described *in situ* by participants, although calypso is also referred as *ghoema* beat more generally, whereas klopse *jol* refers to the *moppie* beat, a 2-beat cycle, which is a faster and simpler version of the calypso, or what some scholars describe as the *habanera* rhythm (Figure 5.5b).

The beat is also the keystone of *moppies*, characterised by the *slasluka* (slang for ‘old fast tune’), which refers to the process of speeding up songs to match the tempo of klopse *jols* (ca. 164 bpm). *Moppies* are also an offspring of *ghoemaliedjes*, which means that calypsos were presumably a later development of the *ghoema*. This also means that klopse *jol* (or *moppie* beat) is possibly closer to the original versions played by slaves at the Cape.

In its simplest definition, klopse *jols* are faster and less syncopated (Track 3), whereas calypsos are slower and more syncopated (Tracks 2 and 3). The underlying rhythm of klopse *jol*, classified by musicologists as the *habanera* rhythm (Sandroni 2008), is well known in Latin American music, which also shares a similar history of slavery, as an accompaniment pattern of tangos in the second half of the nineteenth century until the first decades of the twentieth century, and stems from a more general rhythmic articulation known as *tresillo* (Figure 5.5a). According to Sandroni (2008), the rhythmic changes of samba in the 1930s was not a rhythmic displacement of the *habanera* pattern, but a new articulation, through which the music was able to *free* itself from regular and constant accents with the introduction of smaller rhythmic units than those found in European music, or in the music of former oppressors. The *síncope característica* (Brazilian syncopation) was thus a variation of the *tresillo*, and more conducive to the so-called *requebrado mestiço* (miscegenated hip movements). The characteristics of this new rhythmic feel developed in the 1930s in the Estácio area in Rio is what constitutes the present feel of samba, which is very much loose in terms of rhythm and dance.

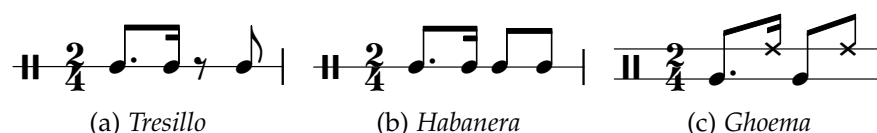


Figure 5.5: Diasporic and creole rhythms

From a historic and musicological standpoint, the question I am trying to pose is whether the evolution of the *ghoema* reflects to a greater or lesser extent the evolution of pre-1930 tangos and post-1930 sambas. Namely, if calypso stems from earlier versions of the *moppie* beat (klopse *jol*), then presumably both transitions also provide a similar shift from rigid rhythmic contours into a more contrametric feel, present in creole musics in general through additional syncopations and micro rhythms, symbolically signifying the freeing of slaves. When parading under the klopse *jol*, and if one were to step on every beat, the only way to do it is with small steady steps close to the ground, symbolically resembling the way in which former slaves walked with shackles on their feet. Under the calypso, however, the rhythm allows for looser movements of the body, embodying the rupture of shackles and subsequent emancipation of slaves. Indeed, in much of the early etchings and paintings of street marches in Cape Town, like George Duff’s painting of a Cape Town procession on the anniversary of slave emancipation in the 19th century (Museum Africa 71/534), processions appear orderly with paraders neatly aligned

taking small steady steps close to the ground, some of whom also carrying British flags, resembling their attachment and subordination to the dominant culture.

Rhythmic units thus provide hints of the evolution of culture and society, and possibly even predict future developments. For example, as a more conservative style, the rhythms of *ratiep* drumming (see Glossary) are likewise shaped by the *tresillo* pattern, arguably with less emphasis on syncopation, which is to say less bodily freedom and more bowing to orthodox practices. The calypso (or *ghoema* beat), on the other hand, is widely used in secular settings, adding an unusual accent on the second quaver (see Figure 5.1 on page 118) in contrast with its lesser contrametric counterpart (*klopse jol*), still tied to the ‘stiffness’ of European music. The calypso is also the least conservative as far as how participants move, usually performed on the streets and outdoor areas, in some ways resembling the freeing of slaves and their descendants. The usual Western-centric emphasis on beat one is also nonexistent, giving a false impression to outsiders of where the pattern actually begins. This malleability of the beat functions as a kind of wild card in that it can easily be used to accompany a variety of songs from overseas. Thus, instead of being trapped within regional confines, musicians are *free* to traverse new territories. Furthermore, calypsos are generally played at around 120–130 bpm, a pace comfortable enough to move and walk without shackles. Micro rhythms also provides extended opportunities for looser movements of the body, spreading their legs wide and raising their arms high, frequently flapping their tongues and making faces as signs of joy, ‘madness’ and intimidation. Hence, when the mask is on and the *ghoema* is playing, participants are able to brush off their subaltern positions in society, elevate themselves, and let go of their trials and misfortunes.

* * *

For Taqiy, the *klopse* beat (*klopse jol*) is a faster version of the house beat (house music), and an even faster version of the *kwaito* beat, a South African electronic music genre fused with hip-hop and African musical elements (see Glossary). ‘If you speed up any house beat to 164 bpm, you get the coon, the minstrel beat’ (Taqiy, personal communication, 1/5/2015). The *klopse* beat is thus a local version of electronic music providing the rhythmic basis for backing tracks used in competitions, which also include clusters of the more authentic sounds of the Cape minstrels like banjos and tambourines. Backing tracks are produced with a variety of production software, including Cubase and Reason, in which the arranger plays portions of the track using a MIDI keyboard connected to a music sequencer, and combines it with pre-recorded samples. The sound is normally comprised of electronic drums, electric bass following simple tonic-dominant progression, banjos, and tambourines, with new layers added, which may be anything deemed appropriate to the narrative of the story.

For experienced composers like Taqiy, the process of producing *moppies* is straightforward. As an example, he uses the song ‘Never Knew Love Like This

Before' (1980) by Stephanie Mills. The melody is well known and the original tempo slow. To make it into a *moppie*, the arranger (or composer as they are called locally) writes new lyrics to the song, either in English or Afrikaans, sometimes modifying the original melody, and speeds up the tempo to 164 beats per minute. Lyrics are especially important. They define the theme of the *moppie*, and guide choreography and backing track, helping to outline the story in a minstrel feel and style. Musicians I met in Cape Town outside klopse have referred to this process of repurposing foreign music as *ghoemarising* the song, although I have not heard the term used by klopse musicians themselves. Under faster tempos, however, lyrics are not always intelligible, so in order to project a clearer message to spectators and judges, composers rely on the repetition of 'catchy' phrases, also using 'props' and choreography to add a visual explanation of the story.

Moppies also rely on the concept of gimmicks as a way to 'introduce an element of surprise and make the audience laugh' (Gaulier and Martin 2017, p. 164). In 2005, Taqiy wrote his first *moppie*, entitled 'The Sexy Moffie of Woodstock', which narrates the story of a Chinese *moffie* who only wore branded clothes from China, like G-Star jeans and Guess bags. The gimmick of the comic was the visual element and transformation of the *moffie* through her clothing choice, mocking her appeal to fashion as a symbol of status. The solo singer enacted the *moffie* character according to her personality, emphasising the fact that she was not an ordinary *moffie*, but a *sexy moffie*, then used as the 'catchy' phrase and repeated at least 20 times during the performance. 'Moppies are literally *com-posed*: melodic snatches are *placed with* other melodic snatches' (from Old French *composer*: com 'with' + poser 'to place') (Gaulier and Martin 2017, p. 144). 'The *moppie*', according to Martin (1999, p. 26),

is a comic song, prepared for the occasion. It appears frequently in the form of a potpourri of two or three different melodies borrowed from pop hits, with a habanera rhythm in the middle section. The *moppie* is sung, or more precisely acted out, by a soloist with energetic body movements and animated gestures of the arms and hands, supported by the choir, to the beat of the *ghoema*.

Having received first prize every year since 2005, Taqiy is today one of the most respected and sought-after comic composers in Cape Town, despite being averse to comedy himself. When asked about his method of composition, he refers to a mental process of 'visualising' the comic, so that instead of sketching ideas manually on paper, he first visualises the comic in his head before recording it in his home studio. As he said, a good number of his comics were created while dreaming at night, unintentionally, which he attributes to the supernatural. What makes his *moppies* especially appealing, however, is most likely the result of his specialisation and background in pop music and variety shows, but also his ability as a coach to inspire his singers. Not only is he aware of the latest hits, but he is also able to arrange these hits in ways that under-trained competitors cannot, forcing rivals to hire music professionals like Taqiy, which is to some extent redefining

social relations into financial relations, with the purpose of winning competition and attracting the attention of potential sponsors and buyers. In a sense, the *ghoema* is freeing a fortunate few from the shackles of menial labour, who are now hopping from one troupe to the next so long as there are troupes willing to hire them.

5.2 MODERN INTERPRETATIONS

3 January 2015, Athlone Stadium, second day of competition. Members of the singing pack are ready on stage waiting for the playback to begin. They are about to perform the English Comic, one of the singing items, in front of a large audience, including adjudicators on the top floor of the stadium, when the commentator makes his introductory announcement to spur the crowd's attention. Spectators take the opportunity to cheer, scream, and chant names as the music begins. As usual, singers are positioned very close to one another in a two-row semi-circle, and grouped by their vocal range. There are close to 40 male singers and one female singer on stage, all of whom are wearing white gloves, panama hats and dressed in the usual minstrel uniform. To the right of the stage are the basses and baritones, and to the left are the 'melodies' (tenors) with nine microphones and three monitors facing the choir. During the months that precede competition, the coach monitors his choir closely, and is aware of the performing skills of each of his musicians, rearranging their positions often. The more competent the performer, the more likely that he or she will move to the front row. Likewise, competent singers are placed closest to the microphone, creating a subtle hierarchy among singers of the pack. The coach also decides who will sing the prestigious Group Song, narrowing the choir to the best 25 singers, as a small ladder to other music, and possibly work, opportunities.

After one bar of drum groove, the pack begins singing a series of excerpts of popular songs. The first one is the Latin pop classic 'Conga' (1985) by Gloria Estefan, with the choir singing in unison and making choreographed moves throughout. The lead singer then slowly appears from the inside of the stadium dressed in a pink stuffed animal outfit, blond curly wig and a Minnie's headband with big ears and bow hair. As the chorus approaches, he jumps onto the stage making intricate moves inspired by salsa dancing, again drawing more screams from the crowd. Especially in *moppies*, visual clues like choreography play a critical role in the effectiveness and assessment of the performance. Some of the moves include hip shaking, butt slapping and other iconic disco dance gestures, seeking to draw laughter from the crowd and impress the judges. The lead singer then reaches his microphone at the centre of the stage and begins singing the main melody as a call and response between soloist and the choir, telling the story of Hana and her journey to fame, whilst choreography continues throughout.

Following the Latin pop introduction (120 bpm, Latin funk feel), which ends part 1, the music changes to an uptempo minstrel feel, known as *klopse jol*, of

another repurposed popular song.³ The lyrics now describe the main character, who ‘wants to be a tv star, that’s how she wants to shine’. The song continues as a dialogue between the lead singer (female) and the choir (male), in which she wants to ‘steal the show’ and ‘shine under the spotlight’. When the uptempo minstrel part finishes, the lead singer then exits the stage to change clothes, reaching the end of part 2. Part 3 begins with Gloria Gaynor’s dance classic ‘I Will Survive’ (1978), unveiling Hana’s fear and anxieties. In the meantime, a stage assistant quickly rolls a red carpet from the stage leading to the stadium’s underground entrance, and the choir resumes the story: ‘Hana was afraid, she was petrified. Can she perform on her own tonight?’ With many nights spent practising the song, ‘she grew strong’, her struggle finally paid off ‘and now she’s back, she’s got the groove’, transitioning from a clumsy pink animal into a full-fledged artist. As part 3 reaches its end, the lead singer once again returns to the stage, this time dressed with a white skirt, black tights, blonde wig and sun glasses, again drawing more cheering and screaming from the audience. The choir then squats with their back to the audience replacing white hats into golden hats as a symbol of Hana’s transition to success, while the twentieth Century Fox drum roll announces the singer’s glorious entrance. Walking over the red carpet, and more feminine than before, the character is now fully changed, singing a soft ballad version of ‘Price Tag’ (2011) by Jessie J (70 bpm) in a mellow head voice register and with new lyrics added:

<i>Moppie</i>	This is my time to shine, I’m really gonna make it mine. You gotta watch the press, ‘cause what’s the best, stop for a minute and smile.	Seems like everybody’s got a price. I wonder how they sleep at night, When the sale comes first, And the truth comes second, Just stop for a minute and smile.	<i>Original</i>
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As the ballad ends, the music changes to a faster tempo of Meghan Trainor’s song ‘All About That Bass’ (2014), now with a more pop two-and-four backbeat feel, highlighting her natural and ‘unphotoshoped’ beauty, and insisting that fame has not turned her away from her real self:

<i>Moppie</i>	You know that I am real and I will never stop If you got beauty booty just raise ‘em up Every inch of me is perfect from the bottom to the top.	We know that shit ain’t real Come on now, make it stop If you got beauty beauty just raise ‘em up ‘Cause every inch of you is perfect from the bottom to the top.	<i>Original</i>
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Moppies are normally disposed and never sung again, but the appropriation of popular melodies, as lyrics and melodies reveal, leaves doubt as to whether *moppies*

³ For a discussion on the structure of *moppies*, see Gaulier and Martin (2017, pp. 158–168).

constitute copyright infringement. At this point, a second performer appears dancing close to the stage. He is an overweight man with a blonde wig dressed in a pink skirt and short blouse leaving his 'beer' belly flopping over the skirt. Cheering accompanies every new move of the second character, making screams louder as the man's improvisation becomes more provocative. Hip and breast shaking, butt slapping and nipple licking continue throughout much of the chorus when the music speeds up to a klopse *jol* interlude to the classic soundtrack 'Flashdance... What a Feeling', exposing Hana's feelings toward music and how it changed her life.

In addition to the faster tempo, the minstrel feel also adds an emphasis on the offbeats, almost like a polka, marked by banjos and jingles on the offbeats, and bass and bass drum on the pulse. This feel interlocks with a traditional body pattern, in which performers 'walk', or jog depending on the tempo, in the same position. The story shows the liberating experience of music, and how Hana was gradually freeing herself. She now can feel the music and understand the rhythm, and no one can take that away from her. From a conversation between Hana and the choir, it is clear that Hana was able to carve herself out of obscurity:

Hana:	When I heard the music, I closed my eyes, I felt the rhythm
Choir:	It's a song and the rhythm of the heart
Hana:	What a feeling
Choir:	You got music down
Hana:	I can't believe it
Choir:	You got rhythm now You can take it all And dance all your life

The performance then ends with a cliché greeting in which performers remove their hats to the audience. Then, as the backing track fades and the crowd cheers, the singers make their descent from the stage singing a repurposed version of a traditional Xhosa song which they made it into their fight song, proudly displaying their confidence and provoking some envy on rivals. The *moppie* told the story of Hana's journey to success, and the ways in which music transformed her life. Modern *moppies* in general reflect capitalist arrangements, in which specialised composers and choreographers are hired to produce the next hit, convince adjudicators and rivals of their superior status, and advertise the brand. *Moppies* and most other items are carefully tailored to influence the judges and provide effective means of capturing new membership, making cultural and market competitions difficult to distinguish.

5.2.1 *Plastic moppies*

All in all, *moppies* and most other items reflect an era of heightened consumption, with more conservative participants arguing that *moppies* have lost their essence. One consultant, for example, takes me back to when comic songs were based on the strikes, the protests in the Central Business District (CBD), and struggles of labour unionists, 'but in today's time it is become more of a pop (...) if you dated back to the initial celebration of this carnival, it was never competition, and today, living in today's time, it's only about competition' (Issam, personal communication, 19/4/2015). This includes performance competition among troupes, but also competition in the broader sense of the word, with musicians and troupes vying for money and better positions in the game and in society.

Moppies are one of the highlights of klopse (and Malay Choir) competitions, comprising 2 of the 17 items adjudicated (see Table 3.1). *Moppies* 'are the contemporary offsprings of the *ghoemaliedjies* (*ghoema* drum songs) which were sung in the streets and at picnics' (Martin 2013a, p. 112). Historically, *moppies* were a means of providing entertainment, but also political and satirical commentary. They 'are based on a call and response structure, featuring a soloist who mimes as much as he sings. They address various topics dealing with ordinary life, particular characters living in coloured neighbourhoods, special events, but always submit them to a witty treatment' (Martin 2013a, p. 113). They are traditionally sung in either English or Afrikaans and provide satirical commentary on various socio-political issues, frequently shadowed by local meanings that emanate from conditions of closure. 'Someone from outside the community might not pick up this satirical sneer, but the target audience, the Coloured and Cape Malay community recognizes these subtle jokes, because they have made those jokes themselves many times before' (van der Wal 2009, p. 34).

The idea that 'ethnic' jokes (Martin 2013b) reflect certain codes that may only be intelligible by members of the same group is important. It shows how joking about their troubles may have served as a means of coping with subjugation. *Moppies* also provide cultural experiences of power legitimisation of the underclass through offstage discourse and political commentary, which is not always true with contemporary *moppies*, in particular those performed by troupes rather than Malay choirs, as they are vastly different from traditional forms of singing comics and *ghoemaliedjies*, losing their political appeal, and replacing old Dutch folk songs and political songs with American pop songs. One way to look at these changes is perhaps to realise the influence of sales and promotion of music aimed at bidding and competing for the attention of supporters/buyers in an ever increasing competition for attention and profits. Put simply, those in charge have realised that pop songs are a better selling product. With the rise of competitions and the commercialisation of music, *moppie* composers, who until then had more freedom over their productions, were forced to comply with stringent regulations in order to participate in competitions, gradually depoliticising the content and focus of

their songs.⁴ At least in the case of Malay choirs,

Looking at the songs that were produced during the Apartheid era, it seems that the tradition of singing satirical witty songs to comment on socio-political issues and events was less obvious than during earlier periods and eventually in the free South Africa of today. Especially the competition element, which grew in importance after the founding of the Cape Malay Choir Board, influenced the creative process of song-writing. Songs with less explicit lyrics on socio/political issues were more successful in the competitions. Especially in the state of emergency years, composers deliberately avoided political topics (van der Wal 2009, p. 105).

This shift in the content of song and lyrics, which left political commentaries behind, coincided with the institutionalisation of competition, in which participants began leveraging political influence and control over the structures of the game, not only because apartheid ended (political struggles, in fact, continue), but because of changes in the social structure. One reason why contemporary *moppies* are not politically quiescent is that, with the escalation of crime rates in Cape Town since the 1960s, American pop music provided effective means of putting vulnerable youngsters back into the safety of *klopskamers* and guarantee the well-being of communities.⁵ In both cases, protest songs and pop songs, carnival and comics have always been implicated, although less dramatic as other forms of resistance, in localised forms of political struggle and social transformation, with no attempts of direct confrontation. Put simply, blending with American pop music was a coping strategy within the prevailing system of power, and as internal politics and commercial incentives grew stronger, composers were forced to adjust their productions to incipient demands of the game, making competitions also attractive to a new lead of professional musicians seeking to earn some capital. These subtle forms of resistance and social transformations are carried out by individuals and the local the community, asserting their presence in a world of increasing marginality, bearing notable similarities with everyday life of Muslims in the Middle East.

⁴ See (van der Wal 2009) for an extensive analysis of lyrics spanning over a 70 years period. With focus on *moppies*, the analyses provide important insights of the oral history of the coloured community, in particular of the Cape Malays, expanding on previous attempts to provide a 'working-class version of South African history' (Winberg 1991, p. 81 cited in van der Wal 2009, cf. also Winberg 1992).

⁵ '[T]his [Cape Town culture season] will all be overshadowed by the spate of violence and killings experienced on the Cape Flats. (...) Many *klopskamers* actually serve as havens for children from our communities. While they are there, they feel safe, get fed and are well looked after. This is sometimes very far removed from their circumstances at home' (Botha 2016). '*Moppies* also have a pedagogic ambition; these composers consider that they must convey a message, that they must especially highlight the dangers of gangsterism and drug abuse, which are prevalent in many coloured townships. For such messages to be heard, target audiences must be attracted by the music that carries them. This is why *moppies* often include borrowings from international pop music latest hits, which are sometimes mixed with older favourites' (Gaulier and Martin 2017, p. 145).

The fact that people are able to help themselves and extend their networks surely shows their daily activism and struggles. However, by doing so the actors may hardly win any space from the state (or other sources of power, like capital and patriarchy) – they are not necessarily challenging domination. In fact, governments often encourage self-help and local initiatives so long as they do not turn oppositional. They do so in order to shift some of their burdens of social welfare provision and responsibilities onto the individual citizens. (...) In short, much of the resistance literature confuses what one might consider coping strategies (when the survival of the agents is secured at the cost of themselves or that of fellow humans) and effective participation or subversion of domination (Bayat 2010, p. 55).

In summary, *moppies* lost their political appeal for several apparent reasons, most likely perhaps, due to stringent regulations in the competition and marketing strategies to attract the attention of supporters and spectators. But they still reflect and speak to present realities. In particular, with the commodification of carnival and increasing budgetary demands, comic songs and most other musics of klopse reflect an era of heightened consumption, in which mainstream culture is more appealing to the younger generation, those who will carry on the tradition further, and who are also most vulnerable to drugs, violence and gangsterism. Hence, *moppies* are also in some ways attuned to social and political concerns.

5.2.2 *Music as capital, laughter as politics*

The ability to laugh and make others laugh has been a much valued virtue throughout human history. In the case of *moppies*, laughter has also been a means of self-preservation: ‘Don’t make a sad situation even sadder, try to laugh about it, that’s the purpose of a moppie’ (Samodien 2009 cited in van der Wal 2009, p. 107). For sure, troupe members enjoy laughing and poking fun. But with so much ‘anti-fun-damentalism’ amongst conservative communities, it is not obvious how a *quasi*-Islamic carnival has been able to thrive this far, although it did so not without much quarrelling from the conservative side. For religious leaders and other moral-political authorities in general, laughter is a threat to the political power they seek to control. For Bayat (2010, p. 153), ‘it was this subversive element in subaltern culture that caused upper-class anxiety over festive rituals’. Carnival is thus a form of capital and a means of extending infra-political power, perhaps because festivals and religious ceremonies have the potential to alter ‘conditions of psychic activity’ (Durkheim 1995, p. 424). Vitality increases and passions become more intense, bringing individuals together ‘away from [their] ordinary occupations and preoccupations’. Under such conditions, individuals ‘lose sight of the boundary between the licit and the illicit’, ‘bring[ing] about a kind of thirst for violating those rules that ordinarily are widely obeyed’ (Durkheim 1995, pp. 386–387).

In *Jokes and their relation to the unconscious*, Freud (1989) writes that ‘by making

our enemy small, inferior, despicable or comic, we achieve in a roundaboutway the enjoyment of overcoming him' (Freud 1989, p. 122). 'A joke', he continues 'will allow us to exploit something ridiculous in our enemy which we could not, on account of obstacles in the way, bring forward openly or consciously; once again, then, the joke *will evade restrictions and open sources of pleasure that have become inaccessible*' (Freud 1989, pp. 122–123). Similarly, jokes offer the occasion to express feelings of superiority, as doing so can potentially devalue the subject of laughter (e.g. mocking authorities) and trivialise ones imperfections (e.g. when putting oneself as the subject of laughter). For Hobbes, laughter is the antithesis of subordination, in which '[t]he passion of laughter is nothing else but *sudden glory* arising from sudden *conception of some eminency* in ourselves, by *comparison* with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly' (Hobbes 1839/40, pp. 45–47 cited in Heyd 1982, p. 287).

On a more basic level, laughter serves to relieve nervous energy, which is why, ironically, people often laugh during nervous breakdowns. In Cape Town, the tradition of singing comic songs has perhaps served the purpose of releasing emotional distress and restoring social harmony, helping to 'set the wealth of artistic creativity against an environment of utter poverty' (Fabian 1990 cited in van der Wal 2009, p. 37), and even 'preserve some self-respect in the face of constant humiliation' (van der Wal 2009, p. 40). Laughter thus serves a political purpose, challenging the hegemony of the elites, but also as a display of status. After all, the joy a man can truly command is also a measure of his prosperity.

Blending and adaptation. Blending and adaptation are trivial components of klopse culture. The *ghoema* beat, for example, is the type of rhythm that blends in with most musics of its kind (e.g. tapping the beat [Figure 5.1] over *Beijinho no Ombro* by Valesca Popozuda). This rhythmic permeability functions as a wild card, a metaphor of the coloured people and their ability to imitate, adapt, and 'blend in' with the modern world. I noticed, for example, how some coloureds used the term *spliff* (cannabis) when socialising with whites, and weed, guy or *dagga* when socialising amongst themselves.⁶ Another way in which coloureds blend in is through their ability to change language accents, words, and inflection, frequently code switching, and many can communicate in Xhosa and even Sabela, a subversive language spoken amongst coloured prisoners or in reference to prison culture in

⁶ The use of recreational drugs in coloured township areas is widespread. In addition to drinking alcohol and smoking *dagga* (cannabis), some of the more common drugs are the *brrr* (a mix of Coca-Cola and methamphetamine), 'E' (Ecstasy, MDMA), *mandrax* or buttons (crack), *tik* (methamphetamine), coke (cocaine) and *unga* (heroin). As always, children are the most vulnerable, some of whom begin in Primary School as young as 11 (Saif, personal communication, 3/5/2015), when drug merchants approach them offering free 'lollipops'. As Joel told me, merchants will give them free 'lollipops' a few more times (depending on the type of drug) until the child is eventually addicted, and forced to either pay for the drug or provide services to the merchant in exchange for drugs (personal communication, 28/4/2015).

Cape Town,⁷ or in *Gayle*, a language spoken amongst the country's urban gay community, mixing English, Afrikaans words and slang, originally used as a 'secret language' to disguise unapproved communication (see Cage 1999; Cage and Evans 2003).⁸ As one consultant explained, coloureds have a special talent for imitations, and will only be himself in the presence of others like him.

Interview 5.4: If they [coloureds] speak you can get confused, you don't know what language they're speaking sometimes. They jump from English to Afrikaans into Zulu or even Xhosa. You would never know, even up to the gangsters, every country has gangsterism, in their gangsterism they also must speak Xhosa ((laughs)), so that is actually the coloured culture.

The best comedians [are] the coloureds. The coloured [can] be the comedians of the world, because they can imitate anyone, and therefore you'll see people of Dubai, America and whatever, if they need any artist in music, if they're looking for someone to imitate Whitney Houston, no one better than someone who is coloured. If they are looking for anyone to imitate Michael Jackson, no one better than a coloured, cause he will do the Michael Jackson to the teeth ((laughs)). He will look like MJ, talk like MJ, sing like him, act like him, dance like him.

We can look like any race you didn't even know until we open our mouths and hear the accent coming out of the mouth, so you will notice that if a coloured person speaks to you. If he speaks to a black person, he'll sound like a black person. A black guy will come and say ((imitates a black person speaking)) (...) He will mimic this black guy because they're used to mimicking (...). He'll start talking like the guy, he won't be himself. A coloured person don't like speaking himself, he'll only be himself with a coloured person. If he speaks to a white guy he'll say 'hey, how's it bro?' (...) and he'll start imitating to mix in with the crowd (...) this is what they do, they are perfectionists in imitating (Taqiy, personal communication, 1/5/2015).

Notions of blending and adaptation have also been observed elsewhere. In her visit to Mitchells Plain, Inglese (2016, p. 120) was told she 'could hear a girl who can "double as" Beyoncé, another one who can "do" a Mariah Carey, and a guy who mimics Brian McKnight'. Yet, while much is said about imitation, further research needs to at least trace some of the footsteps of these performers in the

⁷ Sabela language is a mix of English, Afrikaans, Xhosa and Zulu, originally developed by South African miners in the late 1800's, allowing black miners of different ethnicities and white mine owners to communicate among themselves irrespective of their native languages (Charlton 2016).

⁸ As part of a small number of LGBT and queer languages, the term 'derives from the lexical item Gail, which means "chat" in the language' and developed 'in the "moffie" drag culture of the Cape "coloured" community in the Western Cape in the 1950s', although debate on its origins continues (Cage 1999, p. 2).

entertainment business, especially those whose careers were kick started by klopse. From a perspective of oppression and submission, scholars often attribute imitation and creative appropriation as processes of creolisation and ways of undermining domination, displaying the capacity of dominated people to 'emulate their rulers' and validate 'a subaltern presence in the modern world' (Martin 2013a, p. 44). Imitation can perhaps be used as a foothold for climbing the social ladder, forging new identities and detaching one self from prescribed stereotypes, in a sense, freeing township musicians from the confines of marginality, which may also, in some cases, materialise into economic capital.

* * *

In this Chapter, I proposed a musicological analysis of the *ghoema*, examining how the evolution of the beat serve as a metaphor to describe embodied experiences of emancipation. In particular, I reflected on how klopse music helps individuals overcome frustrations and everyday patterns of exploitation as a means forging opportunities in a world of scarce and depleting resources. In the next chapter, I will examine issues of ethnicity, culture and inequality in South Africa and the implications of klopse carnival within the broader society, and its place within a rapidly changing South Africa.

6 *Experiencing klopse, expressing ethnicity*

Posed pictures in Mecca and adorned images of the Quran are hanging on the wall extolled with elaborate golden motifs around them. Rawdha is sitting in the armchair close to the window as we enjoy our soup and watch Schotschekloof play when an African man intervenes and begins talking. Surprised, I ask Nabeel if he knew what the man was saying, but Rawdha was quicker to respond: 'Now it's only blacks on TV, Jonathan', she lamented leaning herself forward, 'no more white, brown or whatever. Only blacks. South Africa is now a black country'.

Race groups in South Africa were kept apart for a very long time thanks to a system of institutionalised discrimination. This racial divide entrenched culture gaps and suppressed the Black majority from sharing the country's wealth, hindering their political presence and opportunities for economic prosperity. Under the pressure of the local and international community, apartheid began being gravely dismantled in the early 1990s paving the way for the first fully democratic elections in 1994 and a new multi-racial parliament, but its legacy still lingers, and although notable improvements have been made since, gaps are still widening among South Africa's diverse population. Following the country's fully democratic election in 1994, social rights' activist Archbishop Desmond Tutu described post-apartheid South Africa as a 'rainbow nation', one in which national groups converge to celebrate cultural diversity.¹

In general, the rainbow metaphor speaks to the colour spectrum of South Africa, and being entrenched in the politics of identity also prompts policy-making decisions. Over the years, the rainbow discourse has served as both political jargon and nation building narrative of the African National Congress (ANC), oversimplifying the inherent complexity of multiculturalism.² Rainbowism and

¹ In Xhosa cosmology the term 'rainbow signifies hope and the assurance of a bright future' (Baines 1998, p. 1). In Irish folklore, and less optimistic, rainbows are pathways for gold, but the optical effect that it creates is always relative to the location of the viewer, making it impossible to determine where the rainbow begins and where it ends, making the promise of wealth elusive.

² 'By multiculturalism, I refer to the state of a society or the world containing many cultures that interact in some significant way with each other. (...) Multiculturalism is not by definition good or bad' (Gutmann 1993, pp. 171–172). 'Most modern people are multicultural, but not therefore cosmopolitan or liberal in their beliefs about social justice' (Gutmann 1993, p. 184).

non-racialism, however, are not interchangeable, and scholars frequently contest multiculturalist policies, claiming that in promoting them, the ANC is promoting the very same racialism which they fought against (see Ramsamy 2007). This profiling also feeds consumer polarisation, as well as political polarisation through which politicians are more likely to gain support from the oppressed majority, promising to redress their 'lesser' status, making cultural diversity and social inequality inherently political. The fact is government efforts to address inequality attempt to solve problems that governments themselves create, which have made the population increasingly dependent on them.

This chapter is divided in two parts. In the first part, I reflect on klopse's collective identity, seeking to understand why klopse appeals to one group but not others, and the effects of the collective mind on the cooperative nature of music-making, through which participants congregate around a common need for joy, and realise the significance of collectivism in the mitigation of struggles. In subscribing to a common consciousness, members act as a unit to achieve goals and solidarity independent of work contracts and commercial interests. In theory, by engaging in cooperative action, they are able to annihilate some of the struggles that individually would be difficult to achieve. In the second part, I examine the implications of diversity from a cultural minority perspective, and attempt to explain how problems of intolerance are fused with social economic status, and the implications of music as a medium of reconciliation in the new and rapidly changing South Africa.

6.1 A COLLECTIVE PURSUIT OF JOY

6.1.1 *Emotion and transcendence*

Troupe performances are filled with expressions of joy and euphoria. One way to look at how these feelings erupt is perhaps through notions of music entrainment and contagion, and how individuals surrender to the collective emotion. Under the influence of the crowd, 'individuals become unwittingly infected with emotion' (Ward 2002, p. 461), and aroused by the influence of others in a shared emotional hype. 'Laugh, and the world laughs with you' (Ella Wheeler Wilcox, cited in Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1994). Whether participants truly feel the way they express themselves I will never know, but after closely watching troupes perform and several months playing the *ghoema*, I have come to realise that the rhythm appears to trigger specific cultural cues that create conditions for mutual entrainment and deep social relationships. One such example during performances are various synchronous movements of the body, two of which I describe in Figure 6.1.

Like others of this kind, the ritual dance adds an appealing visual element to the performance, creating synchrony among the bodies, which are also easily noticed from the outside, and making us feel even more a part of the larger 'machinery'. Every dance is spontaneous in that it is not exactly choreographed with the music as in the comics and Group Song, and develops casually among few members

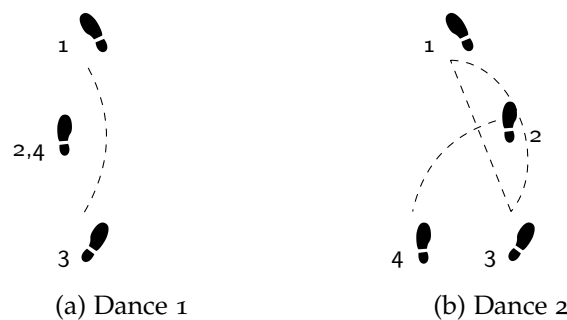


Figure 6.1: A representation of the *jiga* dance (pronounced gee-gha). Dashed lines represent the movement of the feet. Both patterns are a 4-beat sequence. The pattern on the left (6.1a) goes as follows: (1) right foot steps forward, (2) left foot *steps* in-place, (3) right foot steps backward, (4) left foot *steps* in-place. As indicated by the feet direction, stepping foot and body (not the head) rotate slightly left on beat 1 and slightly right on beat 3. On beats 2 and 4 the body is facing forward. This pattern was frequently performed by members of the *gummy* section. The pattern on the right (6.1b) is less conservative, almost moronic, with wider movements of body, giving the impression that dancers are dizzy, unable to maintain their stability, and about to fall. Figuratively, it also represents the breaking of shackles (see Section 5.1).

of the troupe. Each small group within the troupe might have their own dance gimmicks, but they never escalate to the entire troupe. Parades are also driven by a continuous forward motion, a symbol of progression and prosperity. In fact, one seemingly trivial job carried out by those of us holding a wine barrel over our tummies was to push those in front forward, producing a slow undulating rippling motion across the entire troupe, in which bodies are continuously being touched and reminded of the collective. It felt awkwardly impolite to be pushing others with my drum, and as much as I tried to avoid, I accepted it as normal. In any case, it gave us an additional role in the band, and many of us were also pushed forward by the drummers behind when our pacing slowed down. In a sense, through this subtle pushing and cramming motions, the man becomes attached to the larger machinery and no longer experiences himself as an individual. In fact, when marching through narrow roads, with members waving umbrellas up and down, it sometimes becomes literally impossible not to be taken by the mass.

Notably, every time the band ‘strikes’, non-verbal messages conveyed create a ripple effect influencing how participants behave, and each dance expression feeds new energy into the group. ‘Going mad’ is the term often used locally to describe this heightening of the mood state, in which the body is no longer subjugated to habitual codes of society.³ By mimicking the emotional state of their fellow members, participants create deep behavioural synchrony among themselves/ourselves.

³ When asked to explain the *ghoema*, one consultant replied: ‘*Ghoema* won’t stay the same, it’s like it’s ever-evolving. . . It has evolved over the years, but it’s been there all the time. *Ghoema* also has to some extent a sense of freedom. . . like we were oppressed in apartheid . . . It’s a song of freedom, singing *ghoema*. You will never hear a sad *ghoema* song, *ghoema* is always exciting, it’s uplifting, it’s elevating, it’s always. . . *Ghoema*, it is just being happy and being free, to express yourself in whatever way you can’ (Martin 2013a, p. 349).

'Emotional contagion may well be important in personal relationships because it fosters behavioral synchrony and the movement-to-movement tracking of other people's feelings even when individuals are not explicitly attending to this information' (Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1993, p. 96). Like sports fans, and as a community of practice, troupe members are bound by a common interest. They share common qualities, acquiring certain intimacies, and lowering their inhibitions. 'It may be that people surrounded by others, who are perceived to be similar, feel freer to express [joyous] emotions' (Ward 2002, p. 462).

As we are taken by the thrill of the *ghoema*, emotional convergence occurs. Musicians and dancers become mood inducers, continuously feeding one another with more stimulus. By 'mimic[ing] their companions' fleeting expressions of emotion, they often come to feel pale reflections of their partners' feelings' (Hatfield et al. 1993, p. 96). Under this intimate enclave, klopse is transformed into a state of spirit, a weapon against hardship which they feel is truly theirs and no single man can suppress this or withdraw it from them. For those enduring the hardship of poverty, the rhythm heightens their mood and elevates their status. It is ultimately they who choose how they feel, and project themselves as human beings with value, feelings and desires. The ritual entails hard work and self-sacrifice during the year, as a promise of joy, serving to bond people sharing similar sentiments and struggles. It represents the community and keeps the social fabric alive. More so, the vitality of the klopse spirit depends first and foremost on the gathering of people and continuation of the parades, and in a sense, klopse becomes immortal.

In his analysis of life as a prisoner in Auschwitz, Frankl (1985, p. 87) observes that 'the sort of person the prisoner became was the result of an inner decision [inner freedom], and not the result of camp influences alone. Fundamentally, therefore, any man can, even under such circumstances, decide what shall become of him'. This idea is important and certainly resonates with attitudes of transcendence among participants of the festival, in which case, even under the harshest conditions, a man is always left with one last freedom: How one chooses to feel. That is, 'to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way' (Frankl 1985, p. 86), and for members of the troupe this is a *raison d'être*, serving to extend joy and overcome the barriers of their own struggles, and a lesson learned that cannot be lost so as parades continue.

* * *

A troupe comprises several individuals congregated around a common goal, and bound by what Durkheim defines as collective consciousness, the idea that society is composed of individual but also collective minds, that is, shared feelings, customs, beliefs, and attitudes binding individuals into social groups. In subscribing to a common consciousness, members act as a unit to achieve goals and mutual support. In theory, by engaging in cooperative action, they are able to overcome certain struggles that individually would be difficult to do. Troupe competition

is perhaps one way in which the collective mind manifests, when individuals are struggling for the good of the group, but I also observed a certain mindset as a part of the collective interest. It is perhaps no coincidence that I was asked so many times during parades whether I was enjoying myself.

Locally, this mindset is called *tariék* (from Arabic *t'ariga*: brotherhood; Sufi Islam *t'ariga*: the way) and refers to a trance-like state in which individuals become overly excited and acquire supernatural strength. During *ratiep* performances, Saif explained that 'if people get in the proper mindset or they are in the proper zone, they are able to climb a wall in the room, (...) someone could literally go here in a *tariék* and all of a sudden he'll start to climb this wall' (personal communication, 3/5/2015). The same occurs in *ghoema*, according to a longstanding enthusiast of klopse: '((taps the *ghoema* beat on the table)) that music is a music that makes the people go into *tariék*' (Ron, personal communication, 30/7/2014). Notions of transcending into altered states of consciousness are quite observable and have been documented elsewhere.⁴ '*Tariék* is closely related to *deurmekaar* [adj. confusion, connotes disorder and danger] and consequently also connotes being mixed up, a state of social chaos, anomy. This word definitely has two sides; it means confusion and fun; it can be both positive and negative' (Gaulier and Martin 2017, p. 21). Farid, whose strength of character and sincerity I admired, was one of the first troupe members I met in the field and quickly became a great source of first-hand information. As a veteran dancer, his presence during performances was always palpably felt, drawing himself and others into what he describes as 'going into crazy mode'. He continues,

Interview 6.1: If you start playing music then I start going like *boom*, like I'm doing now, and then, you see, it's in (here). I can get up now and dance here but there's no shyness, I can do what I want to do (...) You can do what you want, as I said to you, that's the only time that you can really be mad if you want to be mad ((laughs)), then you can do anything and everything (...) I can just go into the crazy mode and be crazy (...) Once the band strikes and the music ((sings melody)), then it goes with the beat of the music, then you dance with the beat, and you go with the beat (...) If you stand on the line [sidewalk], you don't get the feeling when you're in it. If you are in it, you feel like *waha!* My face is painted and now I'm going crazy, just being a coon not a *goon* [gangster] (Farid, personal communication, 27/7/2014).

As I mentioned before, joy is a distinguishable trait in klopse performances,

⁴ 'The *tariék*, this thing, you put yourself in another frame of mind. You're now at another level. ... You're in a different world. Now all this apartheid business is at the back of you, and everything is free. Your chains is broken and everything is free and we're flying now and the band is playing, the tambourines is playing and... listen, there's a speed, your tired but you're not tired. You're tired, you're full of sweat, but you're not sweating, but you're not wet. The overwhelmingly joy here, that is being felt is like being in love' (Interview with Sakie 'van die Star' and a troupe captain on 17 January 1994 cited in Martin 1999, p. 180, see also Desai 1993; Gaulier and Martin 2017).

but there is more to joy than a smile in the face. As it is often said, people go ‘out of their minds’ – they ‘go mad’. In Interview 6.1, Farid explains in some detail what this means to him, but for troupe members in general, ‘going mad’ is equally important and many strive to achieve this feeling and stay there for as long as they can. Here I will examine some of the functions and characteristics of the klopse spirit and attempt to explain what makes it unique and appealing for members of the group. In Chapter 2 I reflected on the therapeutic role of klopse and the ways in which it protects members of the group from violence and other imminent threats in the community as both an outlet to channel frustration and a form of collective efficacy through which acoustic communities willingly work for the common good. In addition, I would also argue that klopse performances provide opportunities to experience what Jordania (2011) defines as ‘battle trance’, an altered state of consciousness and collective identity induced by rhythmic music, dance and processes of entrainment (e.g. Figure 6.1). For centuries, in many indigenous societies, trance has been an important aspect of ritualistic healing and religious practices, almost invariably accompanied by music and drumming. On a few occasions during parades, participants would gather in line with their arms locked together as the human wall rocks back and forth ferociously in the spirit of the All Black’s *haka*, singing at the top of their lungs or flapping their tongues wildly as a display of utter madness and intimation.⁵

Evolution provided powerful neurological mechanisms to promote the interests of the group over the individual interests when it mattered the most. That’s why in this state our ancestors had a neurochemically-created uplifting feeling, a spiritual disregard of earthly needs including feelings of fear and pain, and had the intoxicating feeling of obtaining a super-personality (Jordania 2011, p. 174).

The author goes on to mention a number of examples experienced by modern humans, like soldiers in war zones who will frequently put themselves in such state by listening to heavy rock music. In this state of mind, humans feel less pain and fear. They ‘neglect their individual survival instincts as they are fighting for something bigger and more important than their own life’ and become stronger than their usual physical capabilities. They lose their individual identity and acquire a different collective identity (Jordania 2011, p. 99), blurring the lines between licit and illicit through what Durkheim (1995, p. 387) describes as collective consciousness, or collective mind, in which people act against their own self-interest and in response to the will of the group, ‘bring[ing] about a kind of thirst for violating those rules that ordinarily are widely obeyed’. To put this in a different perspective, ‘[t]he sport contests in ancient Greece and Egypt were mainly linked to preparing

⁵ In a similar context of klopse, Inglese (2016, p. 99) observes that ‘[i]n some moments, paraders held hands with one another, thus rhythmically entraining their bodies in space (Black 2011). This action created a sense of communal effort, an intersubjective experience, but also reinforced the movement as individuals aligned their motions with others’.



Figure 6.2: A possible glimpse into the klopse spirit, with a cigarette tucked behind the ear. Photo by Claudia Cardoso, 17 January 2015.

for war and served to hone individual skills in battle. In the [epics] of Homer it is possible to find several examples of sport competitions before battles' (Schwery and Cade 2009, p. 473). By experiencing battle trance, augmented by their state of mind and spirit that competitions evoke, and the fact that music and movement repetition are conducive to trance induction, inter-personal trust increases and the will of the individual vanishes into the will of the group. 'Every member of the group feels bigger, feels stronger, and virtually feels immortal', gobbling music and dance as stimulants for increasing their overall vitality. 'Group members in such an altered state of mind, when they share total trust with each other, emotionally believe that the group cannot be defeated' (Jordania 2011, p. 101).

Locally, this notion of transcendence is known as *tariek*, and appears to resonate more broadly with *ratiep* performances, a Cape Muslim ritual in which dancers stab and pierce themselves with sharp objects without injuries to the sounds of drums and chants, encompassing supernatural strength, music and religious faith. But in the case of klopse, when music alone is not enough, some participants will also resort to psychoactive drugs in order to induce euphoria and heightened sensations. Some of these drugs, like cannabis mixed with crushed *mandrax*, a potent sedative-hypnotic medication, are so strong that smokers have to sit down while smoking the pipe to avoid falling over. In addition to booze, two of the more common psychoactive drugs used are the 'brrr', a mix of Coca-Cola and methamphetamine, and the 'E' (Ecstasy pills), or a stronger version known as MDNA, both of which have been described to cause strong feelings of euphoria and altered state of consciousness. Notwithstanding the side effects, as Marco puts, 'there's no proper way to express yourself when you have your one day of freedom' (personal communication, 16/4/2015). Yet, as a result, excessive rowdiness and loud music continue to create dissonance with the outside community and have been the subject of much debate around the troubles that klopse have caused in the CBD area and beyond, with proposals to move parades to off-street venues.

Some of the effects of Ecstasy include increased euphoria, self-confidence, empathy, sociability and mild hallucination. The effects of methamphetamine are hyperactivity, repetitive and obsessive behaviours, decreased sense of fatigue and

teeth decay.⁶ Other mood and performance enhancing factors include frequent consumption of soft drinks and energy drinks, both of which contain high doses of sugar, caffeine and other lesser known stimulants. Perhaps as a result of high sugar consumption, dental decay is common, and a large number of participants had many or sometimes all of their teeth removed. Especially common is the deliberate extraction of the four upper front teeth. Some use dentures; others do not. But many seem to endorse the idea that toothless smiles and dental ornaments are trendy. In effect, unlike those with permanent teeth, smiles can be changed frequently and many regard it as a fashion accessory, like gold caps and other decorative ornaments, perhaps making the working-class person feel superior to his or her real self. I also heard the term ‘passion gap’ supposedly intended to provide superior oral sex. But not everyone agrees on such trend, and many will prove their teeth are real by placing one thumb behind their two upper front teeth and pushing them forward, in which case, had they been using dentures, the denture would pop out. Teeth extraction is also linked to gangsterism, as a rite of passage, and the looks of a toothless expression and a tattooed body are well worth the intimidation they get from it, marking their presence, personality and utter ‘madness’.

6.1.2 *Selflessness and entrainment*

In addition to being a state of mind and spirit, klopse is also the collective pursuit of joy, and agreement that such experience ‘depends, first, on the continuity of the social groups who perform it and, second, on the way the members of those groups relate to each other’ (Blacking 1973, p. 32). Furthermore, a participant is not attracted to the absolute quality of the music, but rather by ‘what the music has come to mean to him as a member of a particular society or social group’ (Blacking 1973, pp. 32–33).

During long rehearsals in Athlone, band musicians gather to learn their parts and the intricacies of the game. They must learn to trust their coach and fellow bandsmen. Good coaches must also trust their students and inspire them to believe in themselves. Teaching music, and the positive reassurance they get from it, is specially important ‘since schools are not doing it properly, or not doing it at all’ (Martin 2013a, pp. 335–336).⁷ Musicians will also learn the importance of lending themselves to the common goal, instilling a strong sense of purpose, emotional attachment and an unparalleled passion to the sport, which in some rare cases can

⁶ The effects of these drugs are compatible with what I have referred to as ‘klopse spirit’ and how participants express themselves. I am not, however, suggesting that the spirit is necessarily a cause of drug use, but that it can induce and most certainly amplify feelings of euphoria, transcendence and bodily freedom.

⁷ Other scholars have also acknowledged the uplifting effect of music competitions (see. Bruinders 2012; Martin 2013a; Oliphant 2013). According to Martin (2013a, p. 342), ‘[t]he sense of pride and self-worth that singers, especially young singers from disadvantaged milieus, acquire when they give an outstanding interpretation of a difficult piece is nurtured by the recognition they gain from it. Phumi Tsewu emphasises that: “When they get into these competitions, they are looked at with respect”’.

even escalate from playful to violent rivalry. Troupe membership is sometimes a lifetime commitment and those involved must always strive to improve themselves, gradually gaining more confidence and helping the team 'up' its game every year. In doing so, they also improve their rivals, making the community as a whole stronger. But singing and playing musical instruments entail responsibility, and any mistake can cost points on completions.

Dance and music making are a social and bonding experience. 'Through moving and sounding together in synchrony, people can experience a feeling of oneness with others. The signs of this social intimacy are experienced directly – body to body – and thus in the moment are felt to be true' (Turino 2008, pp. 2–3). As members of the troupe, we can feel the sonic presence of our peers through clusters of sounds and interchanging acoustic vibrations. But the ways in which body and mind respond to these clusters are oriented by specific types of cultural knowledge that come to represent themselves as members of the group. It is thus the social context of klopse music that makes it unique and meaningful, making it difficult for out-group members to resonate with the same feelings. Put simply, if shared experiences strengthen sociability, then culture might also facilitate entraining with like-minded people, and those of the same culture. Entrainment is defined as 'a process whereby two rhythmic processes interact with each other in such a way that they adjust towards and eventually "lock in" to a common phase and/or periodicity' (Clayton, Sager and Will 2005, p. 5). It is when two or more oscillators, or rhythmic processes, interact in synchrony.

In physics, the concept of 'acoustic resonance' refers to the resonance frequency at which an object absorbs energy from the vibration of a second object whose frequency matches one of its own natural frequencies of vibration. That is, the object will 'pick out' its resonance from a sound excitation, filtering out all frequencies other than its resonance. Correspondingly, a social resonance, where musicians learn to resonate with members of his or her ethnic group, would function in a similar way. Music researchers have for a very long time grappled with understanding the affective response to music in culture and beyond. In his examination of possession dance music of the Venda, Blacking (1973) contends that music becomes effective through the social environment in which the music is performed. That is, 'granted that music cannot express anything extramusical unless the experience to which it refers already exists in the mind of the listener, can it communicate anything at all to unprepared or unreceptive minds? Cannot even a powerful rhythm excite an unprepared person?' (Blacking 1973, p. 45). Klopse music perhaps excites in-group members in ways that out-group members may not fully comprehend or even approve, but as Blacking (1973, p. 33) rightly said, '[a] man's mystical or psychedelic experiences may not be seen or felt by his neighbors, but they cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to his life in society'.

My role in the band was to play the *gummy* during road marches and drum kit on competitions. Especially during parades, playing klopse was very often imbued with sweat and pain, but abandoning the collective identity and quitting the game is not an option for most, as they are driven by passion and the collective will. In a similar context of rugby, Parrado (2006, p. 14) observes that 'at the very moment of success you cannot isolate your own individual effort from the effort of the entire scrum. You cannot tell where your strength ends and the efforts of the others begin'. For a moment klopse practitioners are a part of the mass and lose sight of their individual self. They 'become part of something larger and more powerful' than themselves as individuals, and their 'will vanishes into the collective will of the team, and if this will is unified and focused, the team surges forward and the scrum magically begins to move'. Like rugby, this is perhaps also the essence of klopse, 'an intense sense of selflessness and unified purpose' that drives the team forward in a continuous motion. Through sensorial and embodied kinetic experiences, the game creates and shapes deep social connections and real life stories. In the process, by joining a troupe, members hold their hands tight through the ups and downs of the klopse and real life roller coaster. As such, these experiences are never alone, and depend on the support of others, their safe harbour, or 'family' as they often say. It is in these experiences of joy and struggle that troupes dwell and have so for such a long time, creating long lasting feelings of brotherhood. As Whitehouse (1996, p. 712) writes, '[t]he bonds of solidarity once forged cannot easily be revoked or extended. They encompass those people who actually endured the terrifying experience together and separate them from the rest of humanity'.

Klopse performances, especially when performance skills are matured, also provide opportunities to experience 'flow', a concept developed by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2000), described as a mind state in which individuals are so deeply connected to a certain activity (e.g. playing music and sports), and in control of their actions, that they become fully aware and connected with their self and the present. In the process, all other thoughts and concerns disappear. Not only is flow an important 'ingredient in any kind of successful cultural performance' (Turner 1979, p. 488), but as an experience it can also lead 'to a feeling of timelessness, or being out of normal time, and to feelings of transcending one's normal self' (Turino 2008, p. 4). Also, '[s]ince flow is experienced as pleasurable, people tend to return again and again to activities that produce this state. As they do so their skill level grows, requiring the challenges to increase if the proper balance is to be maintained' (Turino 2008, pp. 4–5).

Whether dancing, singing or playing a musical instrument, playing klopse involves skill, and in some cases, a competent player can take several years to master his or her techniques, learned through observation and trial and error, and will continue to improve his or her skills as the game develops. Klopse can be roughly divided in two instances: (1) road march and (2) competition, with the former being what Turino (2008) describes as *participatory* music making, and the latter

presentational, at least for the majority of items adjudicated, in that only selected participants are allowed to participate, those with superior levels of skill often hired or chosen by their coach. For those invested in more specialised positions, like drum majors, whose performance requires exceptional dexterity, the opportunities to experience flow are many. This is because there are more opportunities to create the right balance between inherent challenges of the performance and their levels of skill. In the case of drum major performances, there are certain body languages and movements that appear to be widespread among rival drum majors, like spinning the baton and performing various tricks with it, shaking the knees sideways while puffing their cheeks, or sticking their tongues out. Also common are rapid shaking of the torso that makes the fringes of the epaulette (shoulder ornament) graciously move back and forth, all of which encompass a basic set of movements that will distinguish them from other dancers. But there are also those who seem to also rely on dance improvisation, in some cases derived from break dancing and other specialised techniques, as well as copying international artists like Michael Jackson and others. All of these dance and music patterns, and the development of these patterns, constitute human effort and reveal the ways in which human components relate and share emotional experiences and subjectivities, bringing a sense of selflessness and purpose in the context of these relationships.

6.1.3 *A black choir in coloured culture*

The man-troupe relationship is one of genuine commitment, at least for as long as it lasts. After several months of relentless preparation and hard work, the man becomes emotionally attached to his troupe (the motto ‘D6 for life!’ is not without a reason). But as much as he wants his team to win, no single troupe has ever been able to ace every one of the 17 items adjudicated (Table 3.1). This is because some teams are notably better (or worse) than others at certain items, although some critics are saying competitions are becoming less and less predictable. In either case, one way to make the team more competitive on weak items, and increase the chances of winning, is to hire professional groups and musicians, who dress up in the troupe’s uniform, sometimes making themselves indistinguishable from the others, to perform and compete on the team’s behalf. This is a common although not less controversial practice among those who can afford the costs. In general, one seemingly important advantage of music as a means of income is to provide opportunities for interaction between humans who would not otherwise interact, in which case opening up klopse to the out-group performing community could potentially consolidate, and perhaps improve, inter-group relations as a first step forward, but presently for the majority of hired out-group performers, this relationship will likely never truly extend beyond a financial exchange.

The assumption that klopse music is nonracial is not exactly true. For the 2014 carnival competition, Cape Argus District Six Entertainers (D6) hired a black choir, composed of native Xhosa singers, to perform one of their songs. As I was told,

the group had incredible artistic skill and was well suited for the purpose, but in compliance with changing and stringent regulations, several points were deducted from their performance. At the time, rival captains and other members of the Board argued that a black choir was not part of their culture, and pressured the Board to introduce 'diction' as a new pointing criterion. Inevitably, with neither English nor Afrikaans as their first language, the choir faced distinct disadvantage and as a result was not hired the following year.

In response to the episode, one consultant questioned the problems of racialism: 'Now why must I be branded? Is it black, is it Indian, is it Cape Malay, or is it South African?' (Naim, personal communication, 9/4/2015). He went on to describe himself as a Capetonian withstanding the racist principles on which apartheid was founded, which for him continue to linger among the older klopse generation and those in charge of running the event. But according to one history teacher who lives on the Cape Flats and teaches in Bo-Kaap, the situation is changing. 'If you take a child today and you take that child through the whole schooling system, they will actually be buddies. They will be able to see one's differences. But it's amazing, when they come into here, in the beginning, grade 8, they hate each other and they call each other racist names, but at grade 12 level, they tend to understand each other' (Kamil, personal communication, 13/4/2015). If his observations are right, which correspond with other research findings (see, for example, Seekings et al. 2010), differences will slowly erode with conviviality. In the meantime, Naim, who also equates klopse to 'playing sport', maintains that 'we cannot have abnormal sport in abnormal society' and that klopse is not an end in itself, but rather a part of the larger society. 'What is abnormal sport?', he says, 'the whites play on their own, coloureds have their own competition, blacks have their own competition, but there was never one South African team that represented everybody.' Here he is referencing a memorandum issued by the South African Cricket Board (SACB) in 1979 objecting to the impositions of the government over the sport's administration and interests.

When asked why points were taken from the black choir, Naim explains that every year, two representatives of each minstrel group participate in the so-called *bosberaad*, a Board's meeting (sometimes criticised for being manipulative), in which game criteria and other decisions are made and revised.

Interview 6.2: That [*bosberaad*] is where they decided upon- (...) They said that these black choirs [are] not part of our culture, the coloured culture, so that is a () choir, you put them on stage, they are good, they win the points (), it's amazing, their voices is amazing. So they will come up with things like, 'the judges must look out for diction', now when it comes to Afrikaans, ethnically, it is difficult for an African to pronounce certain words in Afrikaans, so he is singing his diction in Afrikaans, when is an Afrikaans [speaking] judge listening to him, he will be marked out because his diction is not right, phrasing and things

like that on the note ((snaps the fingers)) [they excel]. (Naim, personal communication, 9/4/2015).

The black choir was one example of how differences can still hinder inter-group relations. But even if out-group artists are able to participate, many claim that these artists are taking away the opportunities of those who need more, namely local amateur artists, who they claim should be favoured instead.⁸ Another common complaint is that 'lower team[s] don't have the financial resources to hire these special choirs, so they feel it's unfair with them, who utilise their own [coloured] guys to sing on stage, [rather] than hire these guys who sound good. You got money, you are gonna get the points. That is what they do inside of the *bosberaad*' (Naim, personal communication, 9/4/2015). But Cape Malay choirs are also hired and presumably this is not a problem, perhaps as they are less culturally distinct. Also, hiring solo singers is generally far less expensive and many troupes have been able to afford it. A good number of solo singers were clearly white, so even if the black choir incident was a rare exception, members of the *bosberaad* were still able to anchor group differences to leverage political decisions. Again, klopse appears to have entered a transitional phase where collectivism is being replaced by capitalist arrangements, fundamentally altering former social configurations, and hindering the development of mutual support. The question, however, is not whether a black choir can thrive in coloured culture, but rather if contestants can find holes in the structure to suppress rivals in the competition.

6.1.4 *Ethnic and political boundaries*

Klopse carnival is above all a social experience, without which klopse music would not exist. Troupe members enjoy showcasing their performance and the attention they get from photographers. The tradition is by definition a way of life, but unlike Western consumerist societies, the majority of participants do not *choose* their lifestyle. Instead they are born into it and through it 'acquire particular skills, connections and ways of being in the world that constitute their self-making projects' (Ramsey 2011, p. 1). Similar to loyalist flute bands in Northern Ireland, musicians do not make 'entirely "free" choices, for they are made within the constraints of systems of class and ethnicity which limit the choices available to any individual, and which, moreover, play a crucial role in forming the tastes and dispositions which inform those choices' (Ramsey 2011, p. 1).

Klopse is a subculture or what Slobin (1992) describes as micromusic, small musics in big systems. The tradition is a subset of Cape Town's coloured culture, and an even smaller subset of the South African society, but is nonetheless vital

⁸ With the legacy of apartheid, townships are still largely segregated (Figure 2.6), and music cultures in these townships, including the minstrels, present a certain homogeneity with limited interaction across social groups despite geographic proximity. Local musicians claim that music interaction between population groups is small and often restricted to government funded projects, which is to say that unless spontaneous participation occurs, hiring a black choir is a financial interaction, although perhaps a first step forward.

for many of those involved, creating a sense of membership and feelings of being deeply connected to their fellow troupe members. However, like other forms of subculture, klopse is 'self-defining in terms of [its] ability to articulate differences' (Stokes 1994, p. 7). To put this into perspective, klopse is largely sustained by the working-class coloured community of Cape Town and is often associated with an underclass of people connected with drugs and violence. 'Ethnicities are to be understood in terms of the construction, maintenance and negotiation of boundaries, and not on the putative social "essences" which fill the gaps within them. Ethnic boundaries define and maintain social identities, which can only exist in "a context of opposition and relativities" (Chapman, McDonald and Tonkin 1989, p. 17, cited in Stokes 1994, p. 6)'. In effect, while klopse carnival has served an important role in the struggle for urban survival (see Chapter 2), it did so at the expense of reproducing an ethnic divide. Ethnicity can also limit lifestyle choices, as for the majority of them, identity 'is not chosen, but assigned at birth' (Ramsey 2011, p. 1). This is both good and bad. While it helped create intra-ethnic cohesion and resilience, it also made group differences more prominent. This perhaps explains some of the backlash of intolerance around klopse, where people have overtly complained over the excessive funding diverted to a largely mono-ethnic event and have sought to limit public spending and curb its activities, especially on the Central Business District (CBD) and surrounding area.

The political divisions that characterise carnival (as much as they try to avoid it) have placed klopse on a political map and been the subject of much debate. On one side are those accusing the ANC of funding carnival, supposedly as a political manoeuvre aimed at gaining support from the coloured majority in the Western Cape, the only province not run by them. There are also those accusing the Cape Town City Council (run by the Democratic Alliance) of refraining support from the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association (CTMCA) (see also February 2017), whose members are staunch supporters of the ANC, and having participated in political gatherings before, were accused of campaigning for the National Government.⁹ On the other side is the Kaapse Klopse Karnival Association (KKKA), said to endorse the Municipal government (Democratic Alliance), which for some people explains the recent R4-million tender granted to them for running the annual event in 2017. More specifically, due to non-compliance and paperwork issues, the funding was declined to the CTMCA. Minstrels have also been accused of misappropriation of

⁹ One such event was the ANC 103 anniversary held at the Green Point Stadium where Cape minstrels performed on 10 January 2015. For Kamil, 'it's a lot of anti-government stances that the Western Cape government takes, and even with the coons now, they went to Zuma's celebration at the back and obviously they get punished by the city which is also DA, which are now telling them, you're now pro-ANC' (personal communication, 13/4/2015). For Adeela, 'the minstrels are being used as pawns between the ANC and the DA' (personal communication, 10/04/2015). Naim agrees and adds that 'our local government [Democratic Alliance] will do anything in his power not to have this parade in town because they also want to have the Cape Town Carnival (come join), but because Cape Town Minstrel organisation to which we belong [CTMCA], is endorsed by [the] National Government, which is the ANC, it's forever a fight [and] politics is a dirty game' (personal communication, 9/4/2015).

funds. As a result, the event was one of an even greater divide between political parties, minstrel associations and the community.

6.1.5 *'I like their music, I don't like them'*

Despite 'positive signs of increased inter-racial toleration', race and ethnic relations in post-apartheid South Africa are worrying (Seekings et al. 2010, p. 117). On 11 April 2015, I joined a birthday celebration of a friend in Bo-Kaap, Saabira, who at the time was turning 21. For Cape Muslims, the 21st birthday marks an important transition into adulthood, akin to Latin American *quinceañera* (or *festa de debutante* in Brazil), only 6 years later, expectedly for a more conservative society. There were about 50 people in the main hall, the majority of whom were family members, friends and neighbours, who socialised as they waited for dinner. Some also took turns singing karaoke on the stage and entertaining the audience. As new guests arrived, they greeted the host and gave her presents. The children were playing on the patio next door where they had more space to run and play outside of parental supervision. The older generation gathered inside, in the main hall, and many of the young men and women were in the middle, standing on a metal staircase between the patio and the main hall, where they smoked cigarettes, took pictures and showcased them on their phones and social media. I sat close to Saabira, who was wearing a charming white dress, in one of the tables close to the stage opposite to the main entrance. A few minutes later, her boyfriend, who had been busy helping at the kitchen, and some of her close friends also joined our chatter at the table.

When dinner was over, most of us met on the stairs outside where we could still listen to the music and enjoy the party, but keeping some distance from the more conservative adults inside. I leaned against the handrail on the top end of the stairs to gaze at the children below when a young man named Yazid approached for a chat. Yazid had a firm voice and spoke with much enthusiasm about *takkies* (sneakers), which at the time seemed like the least interesting topic of all, but nevertheless I made some effort to engage in his conversation and understand where he was going, and why he was so enthusiastic about it.

He pulled out his phone to show me the different types of *takkies* he was wanting to buy. Immediately he began speaking with vehement disapproval of a shop where people supposedly traded *takkies* ('you give your shoe and get another one in return'), claiming that the owner could see you on the streets wearing his old shoe. It was difficult to grasp why he was making such a big deal, but as he continued, I realised that, as with clothing and other material goods, a *takkie* is a symbol of fashion and status, and the low-cost trading scheme was perhaps not up to his standards. I remembered, for instance, seeing how some of the young men in the community cleaned their own *takkies*, performing rather complex procedures and using a wide range of implements and products for each of the different parts of the *takkie*, including those with higher purchase power. Overall, American branded clothes and accessories are important markers of identity among the

younger generation, making the group even easier to identify.

As we spoke, Yazid went on to express racist views towards black Africans, insisting that they were like 'sea gulls' with 'peanut brains' and confessed having physically assaulted blacks before. This was not the first time I witnessed signs of hostility towards blacks. As one of my neighbours told me, since her son was a young boy, now in his late teens, he still refuses to share the swimming pool with black Africans. Similarly, a driver from Malawi once told me that the Xhosa people were 'dumb', arguing that when they gathered to drink, they would buy several bottles of beers and share the same bottle, while coloured guys would each use their own glass. He later insisted the Xhosa were xenophobic, lazy, and always demanding housing, education and other public services for free. In Malawi, he said, both government and people are open to receiving foreigners (personal communication, 4/5/2014).

The party extended for a few hours, and at one point, as I was chatting with Awad, I see Yazid singing a traditional kwaito song played by the DJ inside, and I looked at him from across the room and asked: 'What do you think of the music'? He replied: 'I like their music, I don't like them'. His reaction is compelling evidence that music might not have reproached people who have been set against each other (see Martin 2013a). While I agree that identities 'carry, in their intrinsic sonic material, traces of exchanges with other groups', the theory that music found its way across racial barriers during apartheid, ultimately 'invalidat[ing] the ideological principles on which racism and apartheid were founded' (Martin 2013a, p. 172) only goes so far.¹⁰ In the case of Yasin, his taste for Xhosa hip-hop has not brought him closer to Xhosa people. Perhaps because in some contexts, music patterns might carry no real sociological meaning.

Groups may well entrain with out-group musics without requiring social synchrony, that is, synchrony in live social interaction with other social groups. Groups can be defined by their rhythmic patterns, and by rhythmic exchanges within those patterns, but musical exchange alone is not an accurate measurement for how groups relate and empathise with one another. In fact, what real benefits are we really seeing from cross-music in terms of how ethnic groups relate, co-operate, and empathise with one another? The Cape Town Carnival (CTC) is a pilot project in that direction, but it is perhaps too early to tell whether it will succeed in terms of dissolving the clear protrusion of culture gaps and cross-cultural misunderstanding.

¹⁰ 'This is why the efforts made by South African racist powers to manipulate music in order to characterise "racial" and "ethnic" identities always failed. Racist musical engineering could not annihilate the creole foundations laid during the first centuries of colonisation, all it did was to label certain genres or styles of music in the name of the groups that had been "registered"' (Martin 2013a, p. 365).

6.2 PROBLEMS OF (IN)DIFFERENCE

In Cape Town, and supposedly South Africa too, it is not uncommon to hear conversations referencing '*our* people' when referring to one's ethnic group, or '*this is our* time', or '*this is our* culture'. But while race as a marker of self-identification has decreased nationally, 'class identity is rising in prominence' (Netshitenzhe and Chikane 2006, p. 85). In the new and rapidly changing South Africa,¹¹ race hierarchies are being quickly replaced by class hierarchies with the introduction and rise of neoliberal policies, which retained 'most of the features of racial exclusion within which it was constructed' (Netshitenzhe and Chikane 2006, p. 87). With the legacy of apartheid combined with neoliberal policies, cultural mixing is an issue of the present. With the rise of social apartheid post-1994 ANC government, much of the efforts to deracialise the legislation continues to ensure the privileges of a small elite, only now this process is colour blind (Seekings 2007).

Some of the middle-class (often white) South Africans with whom I had the opportunity to socialise have expressed frustration in their attempts to connect with people from other social groups. Tired of 'white middle classness', one consultant explains the challenges of cross racial relationships. 'It used to really frustrate me that I couldn't just be one of the crowd. (...) One of the things that bothers me the most is that it's difficult to get out of your circles' (Nicole, personal communication, 13/4/2015).

Interview 6.3: I met this guy from Khayelitsha [black township]. It was quite shocking to my friends that I had an affair with him. He had this African man dignity grandness that I found attractive. I went to his house a few times and that was kind of strange. It was kind of a shack. I went to a *shebeen* with him. Everyone stared at me. The word got around that there was this white lady at the *shebeen*, so they [children] came to look at me from the gate. People tried to speak to me and ask where I was from, and were always surprised that I was from South Africa, but they treated me like I was a celebrity. There was no way of siding with the crowd and having a party.

It used to really frustrate me that I couldn't just be one of the crowd. I feel that because you are white a lot of people come to you and ask you for money, so you can't travel in your own country without being this thing... When I wanted to go to a local bar and drink beer there and be part of the people... speak to people equally..., but I felt there was always this feeling of 'can we get something from you' (Nicole, personal communication, 13/4/2015).

¹¹ Researchers sometimes describe post-apartheid South Africa as a moving target. 'Most countries are undergoing rapid change with the ever-quickenning pace of neoliberalism but South Africa's emergence out of apartheid, its rapid adjustment to neoliberal policies and its highly politicized environment have made it even more volatile than most' (McDonald 2012, xviii-xix).

During other occasions, she described feeling like a ‘foreigner’ in her own country, which is supposedly how other South Africans also feel outside their habitual spaces. One of the few opportunities for South Africans to mix was the 2010 World Cup, which came as an interesting experiment, when people from all corners of the country met in stadiums and other public venues to celebrate, if only to forge a sense of common, or perhaps uncommon, nationhood. Commercial interests aside, the CTC has given one step forward in attempting to promote cross-cultural socialisation through the performing arts, struggling to build cross-cultural platforms for people who would perhaps not otherwise meet.

6.2.1 *Poverty and intolerance post-liberalisation*

Propelled by a sharp rise in immigration, cultural diversity is an increasing part of contemporary societies, and dealing with the ways in which groups relate to one other has been a major social and political challenge. Inter-ethnic conflicts continue to be a major source of tension and violence around the world, and the situation is no different in South Africa where xenophobic attacks have actually *increased* after liberalisation (Crush and Pendleton 2004; Neocosmos 2010). Arguably, despite the achievements of democratisation, much of the growing intolerance stems from the economic and social crisis facing South Africa’s liberal society, ‘where around half of the population is said to live in poverty’ (Neocosmos 2010, p. 2). Neocosmos (2010) and others also contend that the conception of citizenship during the struggle for independence shifted from an inclusive and unifying concept to one of indigeneity and exclusivity. For Crush and Pendleton (2004), discriminatory treatment towards foreign nationals, in particular those targeted at non-indigenous Africans, African refugees and Francophone Africans, is a by-product of the nation-building project of the ANC in their attempts to promote an inclusive nation-state.

As expected, many African countries have reacted (see BBC 2015). Zambia’s largest radio station, for example, recently ‘blackened out the playing of South African music against xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals taking place in that country [South Africa]’ (Qfm 2015). Xenophobic outbreaks are also attributed to ‘competition from increasing numbers of foreign (largely Somali) traders’ (Misago, Landau and Monson 2009, p. 41), and are frequently carried out by ‘community leaders’¹² in response to the demands of community members, often poor black South Africans who tend ‘to view the migration of people within the region as a “problem” rather than an opportunity and to scapegoat non-citizens’ (Crush and Pendleton 2004, p. 43).

One strategy used to earn people’s trust and gain additional legitimacy,

¹² As Misago et al. (2009, p. 38) explains, ‘[c]ommunity leadership is an attractive alternative for the largely unemployed residents of the informal settlements. It is indeed a form of paid employment or an income-generating activity. It is common practice that those supposedly voluntary structures: i) charge for their services; ii) levy protection fees; iii) sell or let shacks/stands and RDP houses; and iv) take bribes in exchange for solving problems or influencing tender processes for development projects’.

clients and revenues, was to organise attacks on and remove the 'unwanted' foreigners from affected communities. As discussed in more detail below, the xenophobic violence in most affected areas was organised by the above-mentioned parallel structures or by some self-serving members of formal institutions, who capitalised on residents' feelings, fears and negative attitudes towards non-nationals. Their help in 'resolving' this bitterly felt problem served to demonstrate a superior efficacy in 'crime'-fighting and greater empathy with community concerns (Misago et al. 2009, pp. 39–40).

Intolerance is thus a result of mistrust towards out-groups, threatening the social and economic status of the dominant group. A large body of research suggests that levels of mistrust and hostility increase with cultural diversity. More recently, however, scholars are also suggesting that economically deprived neighbourhoods and disorder are the '*main* factors eroding [community formation and] interpersonal trust' (Letki 2008, p. 7, emphasis added). This is to say that communities are short in social capital not because they are ethnically diverse, but because they face economic disadvantage, therefore 'limit[ing] opportunities to participate in social life and exercise civic rights' (Letki 2008, p. 24). The argument is consistent with studies on Cape Town, where 'people in rich neighbourhoods seem to have more social capital than people in poor neighbourhoods', and that 'coloured people have more social capital than African people, (...) but the main effect is of neighbourhood income, even controlling for race' (Seekings et al. 2010, p. 58).

Furthermore, interaction 'with the former and potential "other" remain framed by notions of respectability and threat that largely cut across racial lines. It is the persistence or worsening of crime, violence and insecurity that helps neighbours to reach across former racial divides' (Seekings et al. 2010, p. 131). Another important point is that 'racial differences are now, in part but not entirely, a matter of cultural diversity' (Seekings et al. 2010, p. 117). That is, race is becoming more of a multi-cultural concept than a hierarchical one, as it was previously during the apartheid period. Another step forward is that, despite increasing animosity towards foreign nationals, inter-racial intolerance towards South African citizens is becoming less severe (Seekings et al. 2010) perhaps as a result of inter-group conviviality in the work space.

In the mid-1990s South Africa transitioned from an isolated based economy to a free-market economy, but despite economic growth, unemployment rates and inequality rapidly increased. The troubling result is that, because poverty has a negative influence on the 'individual's ability and willingness to engage in social activities with neighbours', mistrust as well as 'inter-group prejudice and competition' increase (Letki 2008, p. 2). Another important factor is the unfortunate exclusion of the poor from access to quality education, and one of their better chances of escaping subservience. Following the #RhodesMustFall occupy movement in 2015, a new protest emerged with less emphasis on race and more on economic apartheid, seeking to affirm the black majority and decolonise universit-

ies where the majority of students and staff are white. #FeesMustFall protesters as they were called quickly spread across university campuses in South Africa seeking to redress increasing university fees, outsourcing and the decline in government funding for higher education. In summary, cultural diversity appears to be gaining more relevance than previous race categories, and coloured-black relations are slowly improving, but poverty, inequality and associated problems have become the main engine behind South Africa's economic, social and political crisis.

6.2.2 *Social capital and low economic status*

Social capital plays a critical role in the mitigation of poverty, as well as in protecting democracies, without which civic engagement, reciprocity, and trust would otherwise be difficult to achieve. By definition, social capital is a cultural and economic resource informed by social relationships, and is especially important for those lacking other forms of capital. The general theory is that it provides access to resources outside of the mainstream and more formalised income-earning opportunities. Some scholars, however, argue that the theory disassembles the underlying and more threatening structural socio-economic problems of society and the effect of these structures on civic engagement. In other words, 'the intensity of social engagement in a society tends to be strictly related to the level of economic inequality and other structural factors' (Ferragina and Arrigoni 2016, p. 9). I would argue that in the case of music communities on the Cape Flats, informal networks and the accumulation of social capital are still a viable option for sustaining cohesion and filling the void of formalised institutions in spite of growing challenges around power and money.

A large theoretical and empirical body of evidence also shows that diversity is more often than not negatively associated with social capital and cohesion (e.g. Alesina and Ferrara 2000; Costa and Kahn 2003), and that 'individuals living in heterogeneous communities are expected to interact less frequently, which in turn leads to lower levels of interpersonal trust and reciprocity' (Letki 2008, p. 6). But what most studies fail to account for is the effect of a community's socio-economic status on the levels of social capital. A pioneer study on British neighbourhoods concluded that 'despite claims that cultural differences are the key issue undermining social cohesion, socio-economic structure is far more important' (Letki 2008, p. 3), and that when neighbourhood deprivation 'is taken into account, it turns out to be the main factor triggering negative attitudes and lack of trust in out-group members [e.g. other racial groups]' (Letki 2008, p. 7).

In Cape Town, public housing allocation appears to benefit individuals living in selected settlements and communities. But according to Seekings et al. (2010, p. 11), a fairer alternative would 'accommodat[e] all people deemed to be deserving of public housing, regardless of where they live currently, and could contribute to post-apartheid class and racial integration'. The problem is that local governments fear 'undesirable social, political or even economic consequences' as a result of

mixed neighbourhoods (Seekings et al. 2010, v). ‘The 2004 City Council of Cape Town policy on housing allocation’, for example ‘refers to “social cohesion” as one of its guiding principles: the policy should “minimise social conflict”’ (Seekings et al. 2010, p. 13). This is likely because, in the transitional period of the 1990s, there have been numerous land invasions and housing-related protests in South Africa, many of which have escalated into violent conflicts along racial and ethnic lines.

6.2.3 *Struggles of ethnic and music legitimacy*

Different from immigrant-based societies like Canada and Australia, ‘South Africa’s settlers and their descendents have always been outnumbered by the indigenous population’ (Baines 1998, p. 7). With 11 officially recognised languages and a large number of national minorities and subcultures, South Africa’s multicultural challenges are difficult to avoid. In the case of Cape Town, klopse music is facing increasing marginalisation as gentrification continues to rise, making the community less able to participate fully in the social and economic mainstream. From personal conversations and observation, it is my impression that some of the new residents and business owners in gentrified areas are becoming less sympathetic towards klopse, in which case ethnic conflicts are more likely to increase with gentrification. With a steady outflow of traditional residents unable to afford the high costs of living, old traditions in the former Malay Quarter (Bo-Kaap) are being challenged by shifting demographics and modern infrastructures that almost hide the city’s racist past.

The gentrification of historic music sites is by no means exclusive to Cape Town. In San Cristóbal de las Casas in the state of Chiapas, Mexico, tourism ‘wrote the racist history of the town into its economic trajectory and spatial organization as indigenous people were priced out of the center’ (Green 2015). As for the music scene, Green (2015) observes that pro-Zapatista musicians were forced to adapt to capitalist arrangements in order to guarantee livelihood prospects. One musician ‘recounted multiple occasions when proprietors or managers of commercial spaces had specifically requested that he not play the “Himno Zapatista”. The singer, then, changed his set in order to be accepted to perform in many [of the local] venues, singing songs about love and heartbreak instead’. Mainstream music also appeals to klopse musicians, and many express fluency in a variety of styles, but their presence in commercial venues, and in the professional music industry more generally, is still scarce. Sadly, as a result of gentrification, economic and cultural marginalisation, klopse music and those who maintain it are losing legitimacy outside of their ethnic and geographic confines.

6.2.4 *Discrimination of musics and people*

Class prejudice and antagonisms accompanying klopse parades are in many ways similar to recent outbreaks of the so-called ‘rolezinhos’ (‘little strolls’) in Brazil.

These 'are flash-mob style gatherings of teenagers from poor urban areas (*favelas*) in the country's luxury shopping centres. Sometimes hundreds of teens [mostly black and poor] meet in these malls, which are largely used by Brazil's wealthy minority, to party, dance, and sing funk songs' (France24 2014). In both cases, latent discrimination becomes evident when poor subjects and their music leave marginal confines and cross wealthy territory. One significant difference between Brazilian funk and South African klopse, however, is that despite overt stereotypes attached to both styles, the former is perhaps more spread out across social barriers, which simply means that funk is present in the wider spectrum of class in the Brazilian society, and not that it is in any way void of prejudice. In South Africa, however, language and cultural differences are more likely to further encourage social and cultural distancing.

Considering musics as a 'medium of emancipation and a catalyst for civil disobedience' (Tancons 2011, p. 4), the question is to what extent are shared songs pivotal in building democracies. Historically, music has had a notable presence in political demonstrations worldwide, especially as '[it] provides ever so much more variety and satisfaction than politics' (Slobin 1992, p. 24). Even in South Africa, music and dance were ubiquitous among black African protesters during the liberation struggle. In fact, a staple during these demonstrations was the so-called *toyitoyi*, a vigorous dance originated in Zimbabwe and adopted by anti-government protesters in South Africa during the 1980s. When dancing, demonstrators stomp their feet whilst chanting and moving their arms above the head as a symbolic weapon used by non-militants to intimidate the apartheid police. But given the unique case of South Africa and a lack of cultural assimilation in the country, does the *toyitoyi*, being a cultural marker black Africans, cross racial lines (see Jackson 2005)? In particular, what brings South Africans closer? In commenting on the history of South Africa, Jacob refers to the 'bigger project', namely the need to address 'the economic, political and social imbalances that exist to this day' (personal communication, 23/4/2015). It is not a surprise that when South Africans of all cultures (at least those who could afford the tickets) gathered on stadiums during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, they had no shared songs to sing, and instead turned to the obnoxious monotone sounds of plastic *vuvuzelas* to make their cheering heard. In discussing social cohesion as one of the goals of the CTC, one consultant argues that

Interview 6.4: the initiative of the carnival [CTC] is to get people to mix more, but when people get together they don't really know what to do. During the World Cup in 2010, there were lots of spaces that you weren't with your usual groups. Because now it was all open, there were more open spaces. You could feel it. When we went to a match, I don't think anyone really knew what to do because we don't have a shared community of watching football. When we got there no one had any songs to sing or shared songs to sing, so everyone just

blew the *vuvuzela* really loudly, which was terrible (Nicole, personal communication, 13/4/2015).

Her point suggests that a lack of music assimilation can perhaps undermine social cohesion, and that music prejudice might also escalate to social antagonism and discrimination. Some consultants further suggest that *culture* is holding the community back, claiming that entertainment has done little to mobilise change and move the community forward, and that klopse practitioners are debasing themselves to the level of clowns, mentioning the loss of time and money which they argue could be reinvested in other areas of human development. One problem with this argument is neglecting the positive contribution of entertainment in the making and history of South Africa, and the other is ignoring the significance of social capital and networks as a result of carnival. The real challenge is perhaps overcoming historical processes that have led to cultural misunderstanding and intolerance, which are now being reproduced by greater social and economic divisions, making klopse more marginalised and less attuned with the social mainstream. This is also due in part to misconceptions around carnival, prevailing violence and drug culture, feared by the outside community, without much knowledge or faith on its potential to actually hinder social challenges, or realising klopse as a self-organising 'mechanism through which the poor come to help themselves' (Bayat 2010, p. 61). According to Coplan (1985, p. 243), for urban Africans in South Africa, 'performances still provide an attraction, financial resource, and in many cases a central focus for urban associations. Entertainment is therefore an aspect of urban adaptation'.

Ultimately, for those involved, more than a coping strategy, klopse is a fun activity and they do it because it brings them an immense feeling of joy. But while entertainment is appealing to most, if not all, social groups, not all forms of entertainment are shared equally in society, hence low-income consumers more often than not resort to cheap forms of entertainment. Moreover, '[b]ecause modernity is a costly existence, not everyone can afford to be modern. It requires the capacity to conform to the types of behavior and mode of life (adherence to strict discipline of time, space, contracts, and so on) that most vulnerable people simply cannot afford' (Bayat 2010, p. 59). Klopse, however, is not an exclusive activity of the poor. It is also performed by the 'better off', the middle-class, many of whom hold respected professions in society, in which case the tradition appears to function irrespective of class or social mobility. But as a small cultural subset of the larger society, it is not clear whether participation decreases with social mobility, although some consultants suggest that klopse is bound strictly to culture rather than class. If true, this is a positive sign in general, but carnival's modern relevance and legitimacy within and as part of the broader society are being put on trial.

6.3 DIASPORIC RELATIONS AND GROUP RIGHTS

Concluding thoughts

In this chapter, I discussed in-group and out-group relations in South Africa. The aim was to understand what makes klopse unique and appealing to members of the group, how they express their desires and feelings, and how they bond with one another through intra-cultural affinity (those who share similar experiences, and entrain to similar environmental stimuli and endogenous rhythms, e.g. the cyclic migration from impoverished townships to the high-tech urban centre and back). I also examined issues of diversity in South Africa, exploring how intolerance is fused with social economic status as much as cultural diversity. Through processes of entrainment in music making, klopse participants are driven by the collective consciousness, bonding with those whom they share a similar ordeal and the joy of playing together. There are various forces that set individuals apart, beyond any form of legalised racism, but as ethnographic evidence suggests, despite growing disparities in and outside the community, there is more that inspires empathy and brings individuals closer.

Protecting minority groups from coercion. From a political standpoint, multiculturalism, like music, is by definition neither good nor bad. Conflicting tastes and dispositions are and will always be a part of diversity, but could there be a solution to appease conflict. Anthropologists, sociologists and political philosophers have been grappling with the issue of diversity for a very long time. Countries have experimented with different arrangements and different policies have been proposed. Reckoning the need for group rights in the liberal democratic model, Kymlicka (1995) proposes different treatments for national minorities in ways that protects them from coercion. This would entail 'limit[ing] the economic [and] political power exercised by the larger society over the group, [and] ensure that the resources and institutions on which the minority depends are not vulnerable to majority decisions' (Kymlicka 1995, p. 7). This is different from granting them sovereignty in that it would also protect individuals within the group from internal coercion. Until the very foundation that continues to hinder the livelihood of the poor is addressed, group rights (see Henrard 2002) can perhaps loosen some of the tension experienced by troupe members, city council representatives and the larger community.

As I have tried to capture, klopse is maintained around cycles of joy and struggle. By being mutually entrained to each other, participants let go of their tribulations, and create deep and long lasting memories and relationships, with which they learn about themselves and forge bonds of solidarity. 'New Year festivals symbolise the resilience of an independent, uncaptured and non-confrontational feeling of communal belonging, which still assumes the heritage of a founding creolity, but nowadays carries a pervasive anxiety about the place of coloureds in the new South Africa' (Martin 1999, pp. 180–181). But while success once depended

on mutual support, it is now largely a result of financial exchange where players are more easily enticed.

Diasporic interculture and pan-Africanism. As put forward by Saul (2016), ‘a “liberated” but untransformed South Africa has done little to free the continent as a whole’, relying on the collaboration of both global capital and ‘local, chiefly white, capitalist elites’. For Jacob, a resident of Bo-Kaap, the solution lies in strengthening the bonds of solidarity between all people of African descents, moving towards a more heterogenous and encompassing network.

Interview 6.5: Our salvation, politically, culturally, economically, food security, environmental, all of it lies through Africa for us as Africans and we should be getting together, so the big African agenda for me is still one of the things we should be going for, and I’m concerned about the growing disparities in South Africa and the fact that we have increasingly a generation of young people who’s losing hope (...) they don’t feel attached to anything, they don’t feel they fit anywhere, they don’t feel they have any relevance and meaning in what is happening. (Jacob, personal communication, 23/4/2015).

Still today, klopse music resonates with Slobin’s account on the South Asian music market in Britain in that it ‘proceed[s] to evolve in its own way, largely independent of the mainstream music economy, reflecting perhaps, the isolation of the community at large’ (Slobin 1993, p. 64). Perhaps one solution for escaping exclusion is to forge bonds of black identity worldwide, or in the African continent, as Jacob suggests, as a staple of grassroots empowerment and ‘diasporic interculture’ (Slobin 1993) away from resignation and towards greater social and economic opportunities. Cuban music, for example, ‘allowed young urban musicians to emancipate themselves from rural “traditional” musics as well as to escape the hegemony of the coloniser’s culture. It became a tool for forging a modern cultural identity which would eventually come back to its African roots’ (Martin 2013a, 45).¹³

The fact is troupes are nowhere scarce of talent, and instead of relying on government funding and other regulatory authorities, local music productions could perhaps be marketed to the mainstream as Taqiy and others are trying to do. As one District Six resident posits, it was precisely the struggles of political coercion and economic dispossession that allowed minstrels ‘to officiate their tradition on a scale which they could manage without outside interference’ (David, personal

¹³ Whilst visiting Ocean View, I met a drumming group named *eMzantsi Bloka* (a play with the Portuguese word *bloco*), practising a mix of *ghoema* and Brazilian *samba-reggae* rhythms, baptised locally as *ghoema-samba*, with snare, repique, bass drum and hand-made surdos. One way to reflect upon the *ghoema-samba* phenomenon is perhaps to think in terms of South-South solidarity, through which Brazilian music not only offers an aesthetic and pedagogical resource, but it also speaks about the African diaspora more closely as a hybrid black culture that finds resonance among coloured South Africans (see Gilroy 1993).

communication, 19/11/2014), triggering resilient responses from members of the coloured community who drew upon carnival as a powerful force that has shaped coloured identity and kept the community together. Expectedly, the future of carnival is by no means assured, and although there is certainly more that brings people closer, the question remains whether intercultural solidarity can serve as a foothold for another step forward into a life of more joy and less struggle, or at least one in which the struggle is worthwhile.

7 Conclusion

‘THE FOX IN the fable declared that the unattainable sweet grapes were sour; Merton’s “rebellious” fox renounces the prevailing taste for sweet grapes; but the “adaptive” lower-class fox (...) does neither – rather, he acquires a taste for sour grapes’ (Rodman 1963, p. 209). Troupes are the adaptive fox, making the best with what destiny has in store for them in order to ensure life is enjoyable and worth living. This research has been concerned with understanding culture and society from a musical ethnography of the *Kaapse Klopse* carnival in Cape Town, South Africa, with focus on the competitive aspects of the performance. In it, I argued that informal social organisations are rowing against the growing demands of the game, highly dependant on external funding and coerced by the monopoly of power holders and their attempt to control and monetise the event by tying musicians to financial obligations. As troupes are increasing their buying power and bidding on the best performers, amateur musicians are losing their place in the sun and their prospects of finding gratification and joy, which means there is now greater competition among troupes and former suppliers of skill, who are having to adapt their aspirations to the actual resources and opportunities available.

In the process of reassessing the data and developing a conceptual framework for the study of klopse, joy and struggle stood out as two encompassing categories, representing embodied experiences of those who suffer the effects of larger structural forces and recourse to finding alternative modes of living around them. But while an effort was made to capture the joy and struggle of klopse participants and their way to finding dignified opportunities where living standards are low and resources are scarce, it was not until later in the course of writing this dissertation that I was able to engage them as technical terms and apply them analytically. In this case, before I proceed to the conclusion of each chapter, I will reflect briefly on how they may increase our understanding of klopse.

By definition, joy is as an emotion of pleasure arising from a sense of well-being; an exultation of spirit, according to the Oxford English Dictionary. The dictionary also defines it as a verb, namely to find or take pleasure; to enjoy oneself; to rejoice. Struggle, on the other hand, is defined as the act of struggling; a resolute contest and continued effort to resist force or free oneself from constraint; a strong effort under difficulties; and a continued resistance to influences threatening destruction.

There is a lot to be said from these definitions alone, but the main point I would like to emphasise is that struggle involves action, usually spurred by the desire to improve present conditions and achieve a desirable end (e.g. joy, bragging rights, social status and so on). This is to say that through music and dance, individuals ‘can take action in and on the world’, ‘within and against larger political, economic and social structure’ (Inglese 2016, p. 60). They serve as points of tension and release, ensuring continuous movement and cadence and a cyclic experience of sacrifice and reward that keeps participants engaged and moving forward. In klopse, one has to feel the beat and let mind and body go with it, triggering a particular mindset and embodied response that helps participants let go of their anxieties accumulated during the year. In particular, this mindset is linked to the physical and emotional survival of the individual and group, creating a strong sense of community and purpose. It also produces a heightened sense of arousal from the joy of playing and dancing in synchrony, which may be expressed on the outside, but is always felt on the inside. Running parallel to the social and political mainstream, klopse is thus a symbolic expression of life and isolation from the traditional social system by those who maintain it, providing a viable substitute to the shortcomings of life.

Present in every stage of the production chain, joy and struggle are ubiquitous among klopse communities. They begin with the many commutes to and from far flung areas with remote access to transportation, usually on the back of crowded *bakkies* (pick-up trucks) sitting on the hard floor buzzing and chanting tunes after a full day of work. Commutes and practices are held weekly, usually several days a week, amounting to many hours that have to be deducted from precious family time and other social activities and obligations. In klopse, desires are not always achieved and the joy of playing can go down the drain quickly if too much expectation is put on political and material rewards. Yet, the effort to ensure life is enjoyable is usually recouped by the emotional bonds between the man and his troupe, playing in synchrony and entraining with other humans. I remember Waddah, a well-established dancer with close to 40 years of experience, who refused to retire from klopse despite joint pain which made dancing for longer periods difficult. I remember his humble character and eyes filled with joy as he told me what kept him going was the love he gets back from his audience, and went on to tell me about a girl who every year would stop to hug him on the street, as both an evidence of the endurance of klopse and fundamental human necessity to love and be loved. Next, I will proceed with the final remarks and a brief discussion of each chapter.

Resilience and channelling distress, Chapter 2

For the majority of players, the prospect of success in the formal society is low, and work life is usually not an occasion of pride. Klopse therefore extends society, as a source of resilience, in ways that will vouch opportunities for success in their own terms. Drugs and urban violence, for example, discussed in Chapter 2, are both a

menace to the Cape Flats, the locus of carnival, and not easily erased from the fate of its residents. Under external conditions which the community has little control over, carnival creates pathways for dealing with social exclusion, also in the form of collective efficacy without being punitive, diminishing some of the burdens of drugs and violence in the absence of effective formalised institutions, which too often focus on the criminalisation of Black youth, rather than the underlying causes of why violence unfolds, and why violence in some areas is notoriously higher than others. The fact is troupes were never designed or intended to reduce crime, but – like the adaptive fox – to become such device if there is ever a need for it, as a preemptive channel of socialisation where individuals are more likely to cooperate and increase the sum of good, if only to shift their attention away from anger and wrongdoing, and bring participants closer under the safety of the *klopskamer*, as a defensive mechanism to ensure their survival and well-being.

From empirical observation and a close dialogue with a small sample of participants, my intentions in the field were strictly exploratory, although not less bound to the anthropological tradition of the studies of music. During fieldwork, I lived in the community and participated in one of the troupes under the CT-MCA Board to learn what it means, and how it feels, to be a troupe member, notwithstanding our differences and traumatic experiences of racism and active impoverishment that separated many of us. During this time period, I tried to gain a closer insight into the subjects' viewpoints as much as my immersion allowed. Hence, by reflecting on these experiences, an attempt was made to understand how troupe members interact with the environment, ultimately contributing to the development of the urban space and mitigation of physical and emotional distress. Through an ethnographic account of the subject's experiences and my own observations, I argued that music and competitions are catalysts of socialisation, in which participants are drawn closer by their ability to entrain with one another, creating acoustic communities that have become vital alternatives to overcoming social exclusion. Ultimately, participants are drawn closer not because of the shade of their skin, but because of the affective aspects of the music culture and the struggles that bind them closer.

Social and cognitive theorists have been grappling with how attitudes change among victims of trauma and terrorism. In the case of Melanesian initiation cults, '[t]he bonds of solidarity once forged cannot easily be revoked or extended. They encompass those people who actually endured the terrifying experience together and separate them from the rest of humanity' (Whitehouse 1996, p. 713). These 'rites of terror', the author writes, '[are] part of a nexus of psychological and sociological processes, in which specific dimensions of concept-formation, feeling and remembering, are linked to the scale, structure and political ethos of social groups'. I do not argue that klopse and Melanesian initiation cults are comparable, but suggest that the ethos of troupe membership, as in the mentioned cults, is inscribed in emotional terms, and in the affective response to the experiences they share and which separates them from the rest of society.

With staggering death rates on the Cape Flats, self-preservation is perhaps not an easy task and requires a great deal of support from the local community, including band masters, whose role is so fused with those of social workers that police agents will often approach them first when musicians are caught in delinquency. Likewise, competitions provide opportunities to maximise community involvement and for members to pursue a common goal. Success in competitions, however, can only be achieved through commitment and hard work, and how well participants perform have important consequences for their social relationships and well-being. One experienced participant went as far as describing carnival in one word: ‘discipline’, without which there is no carnival, and indeed learning music is like learning discipline, it helps ‘curb juvenile delinquency’ (Martin 2013a, p. 337). Even if the types of success earned are phantom or ephemeral, they still help induce social cohesion among members of the group, providing incentives to expend precious time and energy in music making and other cultural performances.

Band and troupe competitions comprise a reward structure scheme, in which performers are able to vie for trophies, prestige and popularity, receiving attention from photographers and the local media, and by which accomplished performers eventually become exemplary role models and tokens of pride in the community. In a similar context of poverty and social exclusion, Meintjes (2012) argues that it is through the *ngoma* dance that Zulu men are able to heighten masculinity and respectability among the community. In a society marked by war, epidemic and high rates of unemployment, dance becomes one of the last resources for ensuring dignity when everything else fails. Artistry becomes the capital by which Zulu men negotiate their social status, gaining institutional power and prestige within members of the group. ‘Men on the ground use their own forms of authority to sustain their community: everyday life must proceed with as much normality as possible in conditions of violence and struggle’ (Meintjes 2012, p. 49).

As I and others have said, troupes are nowhere scarce of talent. The problem, however, as Marco said, is a scarcity of ‘avenues’ for kids to express themselves, which at present is largely left for local *klopskamers* to provide what Jacob described as ‘music laboratories’, or channels to vent creative energies, while access to most other venues remains limited.

Interview 7.1: Formally, that (used) to be mainly the church, we had bands but it was very small because only with the band, there’s only about 4 or 5 guys who can play, one on drums, one on guitar, one on bass, piano, whereas if you look at the coons, you can reach... the sky is the limit, as you’ve seen with our bands, [it] goes into the hundreds – it’s more inclusive. (Marco, personal communication, 16/4/2015).

In addition to being ‘music laboratories’ and places for social interaction, *klopskamers* also provide safety from imminent threats outside. They exist alongside

gangsterism and any crossover between the two is not a coincidence, sometimes competing as modes of production and livelihood in township areas. But while gangsters acquire power and access to material wealth, musicians acquire prestige, self-worth, emotional and sometimes monetary rewards, especially for those who have been able to establish their names in the industry. There are trade-offs to which path they choose, the options among which they choose are limited, and the risks of making the wrong choices are high.

Still, effective coaches and music leaders have managed to inspire musicians to think for themselves and believe in themselves, and so long as they continue inspiring more people, triggering their sensitivities, and making klopse a more appealing alternative, it is likely that music will prevail. The bigger challenge, however, is that problems of governance, wealth distribution, and marginalisation continue to be major impediments. Access to public space is becoming increasingly expensive, and places for music laboratories scarce. Why have these places, free of charge, become so scarce? As Jacob said, street musicians are required to apply for busking permissions, and music making is becoming a struggle in its own right. As far as klopse goes, 'when it comes to the business side, then it becomes a bit ugly because, you know, where there's money there's fights, and there's drama, and I think the competition side, yeah, it's not ideal, it's good to compete, but the way they go is like life and death' (Marco, personal communication, 16/4/2015), which brings me to the next point: What are the functions and characteristics of klopse competitions, and why do troupes compete in the first place?

Competition for status, Chapter 3

In discussing the reasons why troupe competitions occur, I looked at how socio-political struggles are entrenched in the ways in which participants organise themselves musically. I argued after Adeela that competitions provide access to cheap entertainment for those whose access to the social and economic mainstream are limited. In particular, I argued that competitions are designed to maximise community involvement and interdependence, creating a common struggle that keeps people engaged and forging opportunities for power, status, and success. As I delved deeper in thinking about competitions, cheap entertainment alone was not enough reason to justify their efforts. I also noticed, for instance, the need to measure themselves against others, engage in discussions, prove themselves, and attain certain status and rewards, setting the group in positions of growth and development even when they fail.

Competitions are also common among those at the top end of the troupes' hierarchy, where troupe authorities are required to entice players, like in professional sports, either through money and contract offers or by glorifying the outcomes of their participation. Some troupe owners might also engage in deceitful persuasion as a last resource to keep their teams competitive, or in some cases to avoid the dreaded fate of bankruptcy. Carnival Boards, however, function as cartels to hedge the interests of the alliance and distribute power among its troupes, although in

reality they are still faced with economic and power asymmetries that too often dictate the outcome of competition.

In general, competitions are designed to ensure relative superiority, and to ensure that no single troupe is guaranteed absolute victory. Most frequently, rival captains will attempt to handicap stronger teams, and ensure fair play, but irrespective of results or how fair the game was played, results are always firmly contested. Competitions are also designed to scale social interaction with strangers, ensure networks of solidarity, favour exchange, supplement income sources and extend their field of social action. When well managed, successful troupes eventually become nuclei of informal income-earning opportunities, where some musicians have been able to kick start music careers and escape menial wage labour beyond carnival. Competitions are also a forum for the formation of social capital, reorienting social priorities by not only exposing social ills in the communities, but also functioning as remedies to these ills. Most importantly, perhaps, participants acquire a sense of purpose and eventually become a part of something bigger and more powerful than themselves as individuals. During this process, and through voluntary music associations, they engage with fellow members in all stages leading to failure and success, joy and struggle, strengthening social bonds and their abilities to cope with adversities, and protecting individuals from failing and having to recover alone.

Klopskamer, and troupes in general, are safe havens for social interaction, where participants meet and engage in areas with very little else to do. There are also important emotional aspects linked to competition and troupe membership, such as becoming an asset in the troupe, feeling self-worth in what they do, and being challenged to improve their skills, which are too often undervalued or not needed in their day jobs. Competitions make participants stronger, if only to create an appearance of success, build confidence and expectations. In a sense, and despite what losing does to the losers, contestants lend themselves to the common good, the collective goal, eventually letting go of their individual self. A good reputation in the carnival industry also ensures future employment and income-earning opportunities, and members will strive to make the best of their participation. Lastly, I argued that fame and status in the context of *klopse* are ways to brush off the impression of poverty and failure faced in the larger society.

A struggle for success, Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, I proposed that those whose quest for success in the formal economy have been suppressed, resort to cultural forms of contests as a play of power and means of forging an appearance of success and participating in the social and political life, in which the ability to control music and musicians becomes a measurement of status. This control of the music culture, however, reflects the very structures of society in which political power held by a small minority exerts outright control over the social structure, creating similar resentments experienced by those not in positions of power. Namely, as troupes are becoming more reliant

on economic power, members are frequently leveraging political influence and requiring guileful strategies to outdo their opponents. The struggle for victory is becoming more toilsome and centralised, with troupe leaders, Board members and sponsors exercising increasing control over the means of production, game design, and repertoire.

Rival troupes will often ban certain items performed by troupes whose performance gimmicks they are unable to outperform, making it difficult for stronger troupes to stop them from winning consecutively. Rival troupe leaders are also often involved in handicapping stronger troupes and regulating creative outputs to curb others from gaining competitive advantage. I referred to this practice as a metaphor of the crab mentality, in which ‘if I can’t do, neither can you’, or as a zero-sum game in which winning is achieved at the cost of bringing down others. Music composers and arrangers frequently complain of having their productions curbed. Conversely, those not participating in the competitions, like *moffies* and *atjas*, appear to have a greater degree of autonomy over their productions. Some participants discussed the problems of creative stagnation and constraints as a result of competitions, which are limiting the tradition from moving forward, and in which they fear participants will eventually lose interest if these limitations continue.

I discussed how competitions are social equalisers designed to draw more people into the game, and how winning ensures opportunities for certain narcissistic behaviours, such as acquiring rewards and signalling their prestige. Group Song champions, especially, acquire symbolic capital and become a source of inspiration for the younger generation, which snowballs down to aspiring singers of the pack. As a dispute of scarce rewards, troupes are also required to protect their ‘wealth’, or creations, to avoid snooping from rival opponents and having players and gimmicks stolen, which are used to manipulate results and prevent rivals from gaining advantage. This is why the most valuable item, the Group Song, requires secrecy during all stages of preparation, and performers take special precautions not to disclose information on the music, choreography, and repertoire. Those who are able to sustain economic dominance in the game can also resort to ‘stealing’, or buying musicians, from rival teams as a form of manipulating results. Carnival Boards, however, function as cartels protecting the interests of their troupes and avoiding smaller teams from going ‘out of business’. In general, a healthy competition ensures that stadiums are always full and that more money is collected from ticket sales.

As a whole, klopse has become increasingly expensive for the ordinary person wishing to participate, and not every troupe owner will have the financial means to play the auction game of bidding for the best coaches and players. Instead, some of them recourse to making false promises and deceitful persuasion to bypass financial constraints and keep their teams competitive. This practice comes at the cost of their reputation, and can even break established bands which can take several years of music training to rebuild these organisations from scratch

before they are able to reenter the market, not to mention the fact that bands often operate under the aegis and supervision of social workers and local police, which means that when bands break, a part of the community breaks with it. Acoustic communities such as these are a means of strengthening solidarity, collective action, and civic participation, ensuring some control in the hands of the civil society.

Troupe members also study their opponents closely in an effort to outperform rival gimmicks, which are meant to challenge rivals and encompass elements of fashion and innovation, which are also used to attract new members and keep old members engaged, as more people generally flock to the more popular troupes. Troupes therefore also compete for popularity, like any other business, and engage in branding and marketing strategies to attract players and supporters, which are the team's fan base, composed of ordinary people or family members, who attend outings and fund raising events, road marches and other performance events. They purchase tickets, buy DVDs of the team, share and collect photos, and even paint their faces with the team's colours. They form psychological bonds with other supporters and identify themselves with one another, participating in the victories and losses together, and, in a sense, they become successful when their teams are successful, or angry when their team loses.

As competitions are becoming more demanding, troupe owners are always on the lookout to entice new talents. But while some musicians are in it for the love of the sport, others are in it for the money, and are more likely to follow the higher bidder. It is not clear what the differences are in terms of loyalty between players and fans. Popular and charismatic players can bring more people in or out, and are generally more attractive to those willing to bid on them, gaining more bargaining and political power within the troupe.

Interview 7.2: I know people who play at certain teams just because I'm there, so what do you do [if] you are a coon troupe captain? You offer me money. You offer me R 1,000 a day to play the trombone for that day. I'm like an idiot, it's a lot of money, I go to the highest bidder, I go to you because the other guys are offering me R 800, you are offering me R 1,000. I go to you, you are the highest bidder, not realising that you're getting 10 people's money here paying R 250 a uniform, you're getting R 250 making a profit more than 100 % profit (Issam, personal communication, 19/4/2015).

The majority of participants, however, are not in it for the money, and troupe owners might sometimes lack the resources to entice players, withdrawing some troupes from the auction game. In any case, some participants suggest that troupe owners glorify their teams to convince people to join, in which case a troupe's size becomes an important indicator of the team's success and ability to ensure sponsorship. In some cases, troupe owners might not pay the amount agreed, or make promises out of thin air. Money and promises were in fact almost always at

the forefront of discussions. Transactions among troupe owners, band masters and musicians are, in general, informal and unregulated. Troupe owners, on the other hand, will often acknowledge the utility of carnival which serves to ensure food for the poor, and alleviate social burdens in the communities. They also acknowledge carnival as cheap entertainment (for those who cannot afford 'pay channels') and opportunities for public acknowledgement of status and merits, considering their troupe a 'bottomless pit' as far as investment goes, although some participants strongly suggested otherwise. Further research needs to account for whether troupes are profitable as well as the motivations behind troupe ownership.

I also argued that musical patterns resemble economic formations in society, representing the resources available in that society and the social structure within which musics are made. *Klopse*, for instance, is a resource of the poor and how they come to organise themselves, made relevant by the social and economic context of the people involved. Music cultures therefore replicate similar structures of power present in the larger society, resulting in similar resentments among those lacking control over music resources, as the tradition is becoming more centralised, and controlled by those holding economic and political power, as a measurement status, perhaps similar to how gangsters, when displaying their guns, signal their power. Even at the cost of these resentments, *klopse* creates deep emotional experiences, and the possibility of a different society. In the end, it is only the pursuit of joy and relationships established that members can really count on, and perhaps the hope that joy will in some way ease the struggles of life, if only for a short while, and that the struggle of music-making and competitions are worthwhile. This resilience creates a reassuring feeling that *klopse* is perhaps immortal and cannot be defeated, offering symbolic immortality for those involved.

Furthermore, I explored how comic songs, one of the 17 items of competitions, have not lost their political appeal. Historically, joking about troubles was a way of coping with subjugation. Today, comics appear in the form of pop music, which is generally more profitable and offers better chances of thriving under growing capitalist formations. I argued that competition regulations have hindered creative expressions, gradually depoliticising the content of songs. American pop music was a survival strategy, and a way of ensuring social order, putting vulnerable youth back into the safety of the *klopskamer*. In summary, comics lost their political appeal because of stringent regulations and marketing strategies to attract youngsters, those who will carry on the tradition forward. I also argued that laughter is a subversive element in subaltern culture, which helps people transcend their status against an environment of poverty and subordination, relieving nervous energy and ensuring them of some prosperity denied in the larger society.

I argued that the *ghoema* beat is a wild card, rhythmically permeable, linked to the group's ability to blend in and adapt, which is also the case with the language they speak (e.g. code switching), and the fact that coloureds are good imitators and comedians. I discussed, for instance, how the beat comprises a new articulation that, like other forms of creole music, freed itself from regular

accents with the introduction of micro-rhythmic units which were more conducive to less constrained forms of dancing, shifting from a rigid rhythmic contour into a contrametric and more syncopated feel, present in creole musics in general. The *ratiep*, for example, is more conservative and has less syncopation than its secular counterpart. Rhythmic units to some extent represent culture and society, serving perhaps as a predictor of culture in society. I argued that the current trends in klopse music reflect capitalist arrangements in which composers are required to produce the next selling hit, and specialised artists and choreographers are hired to convince adjudicators, critics and rivals of their superior status, advertise the brand, and sell out new membership, forcing rivals to hire professional musicians to maintain themselves in business.

Finally, I argued that klopse is an escape from menial labour, bringing individuals closer in more fulfilling environments outside divisions that characterise industrial labour where creativity is not often needed or valued. In general, employed participants feel unmotivated about their day jobs, and find ways to balance their mood by participating in troupe activities, where they are noticed and acknowledged by others beyond their monthly paycheck, and capable of coping with the alien world of menial work. In a sense, competitions are social equalisers against an environment of subjugation, providing opportunities to engage creatively with others and fulfil important human needs. This perhaps explains why self-organised competitions are imperative in the community, and an integral part of their social calendar. In rugby, during the post klopse season, coloured-coloured matches generally involved more violence and rivalry when compared to inter-ethnic matches. That being said, I suggested that competitions are symptoms of deeper divisions in which participants are drawn to compete with people of similar level and who shared similar opportunities in life. In general, in-group competitions increase mutual support among members of the group making themselves more resourceful. I discussed, however, that ethnicity is twofold, on the one hand, building intra-ethnic cohesion and weakening their vulnerabilities, and on the other hand, leaving fewer opportunities for cross-ethnic socialisation. Overall, whites still retain a large part of country's wealth and privileges, maintaining previous social and economic gaps. Klopse competitions therefore provide opportunities for participants to construct their self-image and self-making projects against a system of inequality. After all, how will a Black child see himself or herself when all of his or her rugby heroes are white, outnumbered by blacks in a country where the majority of people, like him or her, are black?

Music and emancipation, Chapter 5

In Chapter 5, I discussed the evolution of the *ghoema* and reflected on whether the changes in rhythm, from constant and regular accents present in European music to contrametric patterns, serve as a metaphor for embodied experiences of emancipation linked to the history of slavery. The argument was based on the assumption that calypso is a later development of the *ghoema*, whereas klopse *jol* is

presumably closer to the original version played by former slaves at the Cape. This is to say that when playing the *klopse jol*, participants move their feet close to the ground, taking small steady steps, similar to how slaves walked with shackles. I also inquired whether *klopse* music is in any way freeing musicians from everyday patterns of exploitation, and considered musical patterns as being reflective not only of local resources but also as resources in themselves. In particular, they are a means of escaping frustrations of low-wage menial labour and forging opportunities in a world of scarce and depleting resources.

It appears, however, that increasing the money supply and shifting musicians into the industrial system is also causing some discontentment. In fact, much of the frustration I heard from participants stems from losing control over their music, being increasingly subservient to power holders, and carnival becoming increasingly centralised and dependent on funders, with participants being told when and where to play. With limited control over the means of transportation and money supply, musicians are having either to rent or buy themselves into the troupe, redefining social relations and turning self-reliance into financial relations so long as there are troupes willing to hire their services.

I also discussed the *ghoema* drum and its origins, drawing on how concepts of slave culture and diasporic rhythms connect people of African descent, as well how the imitation of foreign artists and music is a way of repurposing international success into local success. In many ways, competitions are a present reflection of capitalist arrangements, with professional music personnel hired to produce the next hit and advertise the brand, which is to say that *moppies* and most other items are carefully tailored to influence the judges' decision and provide an effective means of acquiring new membership, making cultural competitions and market competitions difficult to distinguish.

In many ways, carnival reflects an era of heightened consumption, with troupes and musicians having to adjust to the growing demands and pressures of the market, aimed at bidding and competing for the attention of supporters/buyers in an ever increasing competition for attention and profits. However, with the escalation of crime rates in Cape Town since the 1960s, American pop music also provided effective means of attracting vulnerable youngsters back into the safety of *klopskamers*, asserting their presence and struggle in a world of increasing marginality. Carnival and laughter are thus a means of self-preservation and a way of extending intra-political power, helping to 'set the wealth of artistic creativity against an environment of utter poverty' (Fabian 1990 cited in van der Wal 2009, p. 37). Lastly, inspired by the works of Martin (1999, 2013a), I discussed how the rhythmic permeability of the *ghoema* reflects the capacity of township musicians to imitate and become part of a modern world, forging new identities and freeing musicians from the confines of their realities, which may also, under some circumstances, materialise into economic capital beyond the regional scope of carnival.

Contagion and entrainment, Chapter 6

In Chapter 6, I explored the impact of culture as a medium of reconciliation in the new South Africa, looking at problems of intolerance, why klopse appeals to one ethnic group but not others, and the role of music as a medium of cross-cultural socialisation. I argued that the rainbow nation discourse is inherently political and entrenched in the politics of identity. I began by exploring issues of inequalities and how under existing policies, class hierarchies are replacing race hierarchies, and why these policies are not effectively addressing social injustice.

In the later part of the Chapter, I argued that xenophobic attacks increased after liberalisation, and that intolerance is tied to the social and economic crisis facing South Africa's liberal democracy. In general, intolerance is a result of mistrust towards out-groups and the threat it creates to the status of the dominant group. While a large body of literature suggests that mistrust increases with cultural diversity, I have also tried to emphasise the role of economic deprivation, and the fact that communities are short in social capital not because of diversity but because they face economic disadvantage. I also discussed the shortfall of jobs and job creation post-1994, and the exclusion of the poor from quality education, and one of their better chances of escaping subservience. I argued that cultural diversity is a continuation of the race system, and that while coloured-black relations and poverty are improving on some level, social inequality, and associated problems are making the current crisis in South Africa worse for the poor.

It is generally agreed that social capital is important in the mitigation of poverty, especially among those lacking other forms of capital. I argued that music communities on the Cape Flats are still a viable option for sustaining cohesion, and that diversity and low economic status are negatively associated with social capital, where diverse groups are expected to interact less. With the rise of gentrification in Bo-Kaap and other areas, klopse music is becoming more marginalised and losing legitimacy in the city, making its community less capable of fully participating in the social and economic mainstream. The ways in which people have responded to music, and klopse music in particular, are signs of latent discrimination, and a lack of music cohesion and associations.

Music can potentially create social bridges, but musics and spaces for 'music laboratories' are not shared equally in the city. Musics and musicians are often stereotyped, and social groups resort to the types of entertainment that fit their social and economic status and the available resources. Considering music as a medium of protest and civil disobedience, I discussed how the lack of shared songs is hindering democracies in South Africa, where during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, blowing *vuuzelas* was perhaps the only shared 'song' among South African supporters.

In the first part of Chapter 6, I examined the implications of klopse in culture and society and what it means for those who perform this music. I argued that participants express feelings of joy and involve others in a shared emotional hype.

These emotions are triggered by cultural cues and create conditions for mutual entrainment and social relationships, like the many ritual dances and synchronous movements of the body, making individuals feel a part of the group. Through entrainment and subtle pushing and cramming, individuals become attached to this machinery, experiencing his or her existence as a part of the mass. In addition to heightening the mood state, the *ghoema* is also contagious, creating behavioural synchrony that helps liberate their minds and bodies. Ultimately, klopse is a weapon against hardship, which they feel is truly theirs, and no one can withdraw it from them. After all, as participants often say, carnival is '*their time*' and '*their culture*'. In the end, the self-sacrifice which road marches and competitions entail provides opportunities to entrain with one other and learn about their responsibilities to each other, generating communal experiences and emotions, and ensuring prestige and recognition which stand in direct contrast to the processes of everyday life. The vitality of the klopse spirit depends on the gathering of people and continuation of parades, making klopse in a sense immortal.

Klopse also provides opportunities to experience what music scholars have called 'battle trance', induced by rhythmic music, dance, and processes of entrainment, which promotes the interest of the group over the interests of the individual. Under the trance, participants feel less pain and acquire super-personalities, neglecting the barriers between licit and illicit and basic survival instincts. As in *ratiep* performances, performers acquire supernatural strength, induced by music, contagion, and heightened sensations which are also linked to psychoactive drugs, like booze, ecstasy, and methamphetamine. Feelings of euphoria and bodily transformations, like painted faces, homemade ink tattoos (*tjappies*), and toothless smiles, are intimidating, and gangsters have often turned to klopse as a platform to express their status.

Klopse is ultimately a state of joy and spirit, but it is also the pursuit of joy, and the agreement that the experience depends on the continuation and well-being of the group. They learn to trust their coaches and peers, who also inspire them to believe in themselves. Coaches give them positive reassurance which they lack in most other social affairs. Through carnival and competitions they engage in a shared goal and gain a sense of purpose and emotional attachment, constantly striving to improve themselves and their team. The success of the team represents their hard work and commitment, and when their team fails they help each other recover the loss. Klopse is therefore a bonding experience and involves moving and sounding together, and resonating with other members of the group. Shared experiences of joy and struggle strengthen sociability and bring participants closer. Members are driven by passion and the collective will. They become more powerful than themselves as individuals, creating feelings of selflessness, and brotherhood. A troupe is a 'family' and constitutes human effort in providing for the 'family'. The success of the troupe is thus a consequence of how individuals come to relate with one another.

After months of relentless training, individuals become emotionally attached

to the troupe, and are driven by the collective will to lift trophies and express their superior status. Economically superior troupes can hire professional performers to compete on their behalf on some of the items to increase their chances of winning. I discussed how hiring out-group artists could potentially improve cross-cultural relations, but for most performers this relationship is strictly financial, and rival troupes will attempt to hinder out-group participation, many of whom claim that these groups are taking opportunities away from local community artists.

I discussed how *klopse* is a way of life, which most participants are born into with limited choices outside. The activity articulates differences and defines their social identities in a context of oppositions, constrained in a system of class and ethnicity. These differences have incited complaints about excessive funding being diverted to a largely mono-ethnic event and the opposition have sought to limit public spending and curb its activities. The ANC is accused of funding the festival as a political move to attract the coloured vote, while the Democratic Alliance (DA) is accused of retracting support from the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival Association (CTMCA), whose members are aligned with the African National Congress (ANC). The Kaapse Klopse Karnival Association (KKKA), on the other hand, is said to endorse the DA government and has recently received a R4-million tender granted to them for running the annual event, while funding to the CTMCA was declined due to non-compliance and paperwork issues.

Ethnic relations in South Africa are far from attuned. I argued that music might not have appeased people who have been set against each other, and while it carries traces of exchange between groups, the taste for cross-cultural music has not brought the population closer. My intention was to understand how groups really perceive and relate to one another, and music does not appear to have dissolved culture gaps as much as reinforce those gaps. I discussed in-group and out-group relationships and the problems of diversity in South Africa, showing that intolerance is fused with social economic status. As members of the troupe, participants acquire more strength to endure their struggles, and bond with those with whom they share the same ordeal, as a continuous cycle of joy and struggle, creating and amplifying shared emotions and experiences that symbolise their resilience and feelings of belonging. Lastly, I argued that one way of dealing with diversity is to protect minority groups from coercion in ways that would limit the power exercised by the political majority and ensure that minority groups are not affected by majority decisions, also protecting individuals within the group from internal coercion. I also proposed, after one of my consultants, that one way of coping with social isolation is perhaps to forge bonds of black identity worldwide, away from resignation and towards greater social and economic opportunities, rather than relying on government funding and other regulatory authorities, although the question remains whether intercultural solidarity can serve as a foothold for another step forward into a life of more joy and less struggle.

Final remarks and future research

There is still plenty to explore in terms of future research. For example, the intersection between the *Kaapse Klopse* carnival and the Cape Town Carnival (CTC). Professional minstrel groups (e.g. *Ghoema* Entertainers), *atja* troupes, and women exercising roles as troupe owners have also been overlooked. There is also much to explore in terms of the relationship between klopse and globalisation, understanding why troupes are inward reaching, and the growing inequalities in Cape Town and the rest of South Africa. Further research should also pay closer attention to troupes in relation to violence and trauma, drawing further on the literature of music therapy and peace studies, and the relationship between carnival and religion, establishing closer dialogues between researchers, photographers, activists, local musicians and the general community.

In summary, this research looked at klopse as a resilient struggle for joy and success among those lacking opportunities to participate in the social mainstream, transforming cold concrete and grim prospects into colourful and vibrant expression of life and hope. While people are generally attracted by the ideals of success in modern society, for many of those being trampled by neoliberal economic policies, success is the unattainable sweet grapes. Fortunately, however, alternative modes of success and self-glorification are perhaps still viable options and can taste just as good, if not better. But at the pace at which South Africa is rapidly mutating, klopse remains a moving target, a complex social phenomenon with a number of confounding questions yet to be answered. This is to say that in no way have I intended to make objective claims or represent klopse participants in this dissertation. Instead, it is my hope that this project serves as a foothold for future research, and testimony of both the struggle and joy of klopse practitioners.

A *Field recordings*

Track 1

A very small *atja* troupe performing the *ghoema* beat on low-tuned drums (149 bpm). *Atjas* have their own rhythms, distinguishing them from non-*atja* troupes. In this audio example, the troupe is *jolling* on the ground floor of the stadium playing the *ghoema* beat, or a close version of it, in a non-competitive context (for reference, see Figure 5.1 on page 118; see also Glossary). Field recording by the author, 24 January 2015, Athlone Stadium, Cape Town.

<https://archive.org/download/klopse/atjas.ogg>

[1:27 | 1.7 MB]

Track 2

Minstrel troupe performing the calypso, a slower version of the *ghoema* beat (146 bpm). In this audio example, the troupe is *jolling* on the running track of the stadium as part of Best Dress competition. Here I am playing the *gummy* with the recorder inside the right pocket of my satin jacket. There are no brass instruments playing in this excerpt, only the hypnotic and trance-inducing rhythms of the *ghoema* (for reference, see Figure 5.4 on page 122). Field recording by the author, 7 February 2015, Athlone Stadium, Cape Town.

<https://archive.org/download/klopse/calypso.ogg>

[0:52 | 1.0 MB]

Track 3

Minstrel troupe performing the *klopse jol*, a faster version of the *ghoema* beat (192 bpm). In this audio example, recorded from the spectator's point of view, the troupe is *jolling* on the street as part of a mock parade known as *Voorsmakie* (see Glossary). Here the brass band is playing a very fast arrangement of the song 'Tequila' (1958), written by Danny Flores, as a powerful display of strength and endurance. (for reference, see Figure 5.5c on page 124). Field recording by the author, 16 December 2014, Bo-Kaap, Cape Town.

<https://archive.org/download/klopse/jol.ogg>

[2:09 | 2.6 MB]

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Glossary

atja American Indian. *Atja* troupes are a subset of klopse, most known for chasing and frightening children with tomahawks and devil forks, wearing fearsome masks and feather head-dresses.

Bo-Kaap (English: Above the Cape). A former township and historical neighbourhood in Cape Town situated on the slopes of Signal Hill. Also the current headquarters of several troupes, including Good Hope Entertainers, Happy Boys, V&A Entertainers, and District Six Entertainers.

bosberaad A meeting composed of two representatives of each minstrel troupe under a **Carnival Board**, during which members discuss the coming season, competition design and criteria.

captain A troupe member, usually appointed by the **troupe owner**, who works for the team on a voluntary basis, checking that members adhere to the code of conduct of the team, and that certain chores and logistics run smoothly. A captain is above the **soldaat** in a troupe's rank.

Carnival Board Association of carnival leaders composed of a chairperson and two representatives from each club (see also Figure 3.1).

Christmas Bands Military style brass and string bands, largely comprised of respectable working-class Christians, that move from house to house playing Christmas carols and hymns during the Christmas season. Christmas Bands also host their own competitions (see Bruinders 2012).

coach A troupe's music director. There are usually three coaches in a troupe, a band coach and two singing coaches, one for coaching *Moppies* and Group Song, and another for coaching combined choruses, which are song arrangements sung in four-part harmony with instrumental accompaniment.

coon 1 (same as **minstrel** or Cape minstrel). A troupe member and participant of the klopse carnival; 2 mask used by revellers resembling a raccoon, or coon for short, a medium-sized adaptive mammal with white face and black streak on both eyes.

exco (or director). The troupe's executive member. Exco members are only below the **troupe owner** in a troupe's rank.

gear The full uniform used by a troupe member, made of shiny synthetic fabric, and inspired by American blackface minstrels in the 19th century, including panama hat, jacket, trouser, bow tie, white shirt and *takkies* (sneakers).

ghoema [gʊmə] 1 A creole musical style developed at the Cape during the colonial period and still actively performed during New Year festivals in Cape Town; 2 name of a traditional strapped hand drum (see *gummy*).

ghoema beat The main rhythmic pattern of *ghoema* music, traditionally played by banjos, *gummies*, *tamariens*, and jingles, also serving as the rhythmic base of klopse music (see notation on page 118).

ghoemaliedjes *Ghoema* drum songs. Sung by slaves during holidays and picnic gatherings, *ghoemaliedjes* represent the mixing of slaves from Africa and the East. (see Winberg 1992).

gimmick A performance trick, usually one that has not been done before with the purpose of impressing judges, drawing the crowd, and challenging rivals.

gummy (plural: *gummies*). A 10 or 12" strapped hand drum traditionally made from repurposed small wine casks made from wood with herd skin nailed over one of the two open ends. Spelling variations include *ghoema*, *goema*, *gammie*, *goma* or *ghomma* (see notation on page 118; see also Figure 5.3).

haddad A small religious gatherings of Islamic origin in which participants gather to sing Arabic chants (*dhikr*), prepare and eat food.

hout band (or *houte* percussion, English: wood band). A subset of the percussion comprised of *gummies* and *tamariens*.

item A competition item; one of the 17 performance categories adjudicated in klopse competitions (see Table 3.1).

jingle (or cymbal). A headless tambourine, usually 12" with round wooden frame (see notation and playing description on page 104).

jol *verb* (*jols*, *jolling*, *jolled*). To dance; celebrate; 'get into the rhythm'. The term 'klopse jol' also refers to a specific up tempo variant of the *ghoema beat*.

Kaapse Klopse [kapsə klɒpsə] (English: Cape Clubs; anglicised as minstrel troupes).
1 Carnival troupes in Cape Town, often formed by members of sports clubs;
2 name of the troupe festival. Other appellations include **Minstrel** Carnival and **Coon** Carnival.

karienkel A vocal embellishment and technique; a melismatic style of singing characteristic of 'Eastern' music (see Desai 1993; Gaulier and Martin 2017).

klops (or troupe; English: club; plural: *klopse*). A carnival group or team; a social club comprised roughly of a three-tier structure (see Figure 3.1). Rival troupes compete against each other for prizes, profit, bragging rights and other rewards.

klopskamer [klɔpskamər] (English: clubhouse). A troupe's headquarters. The place where troupe members gather to eat, practice, and socialise.

Kombuistaal (English: kitchen language). Colloquial code switching mix of English, Afrikaans, township slang, invented and repurposed words; a distinctive dialect among the working-class coloured community (see McCormick 2004; Stone 2004; Jephta 2015).

kraal [kral] 1 A small informal settlement of shacks; 2 a drug selling spot in **Bo-Kaap**; 3 the headquarters of the Holl Boys gang in Bo-Kaap.

kramat 1 A shrine and burial place; 2 historical pilgrimage site of Muslim devotees. There are several shrines in Cape Town, one of which is the Sheikh Yusuf Kramat located in Macassar, where visitors camp, play music around bond fires and socialise during the Easter holiday.

kwaito Electronic music genre originated in the 1990s in Zola (township in Soweto, South Africa), mixing local and international musical sources, like hip-hop, house-music, reggae, ragga, and bubblegum music (see Peterson 2003).

Malay Choir (or *Sangkoor*). Like *klopse*, Malay Choirs meet regularly, rehearse several days a week, and engage in similar activities, although largely practised by respectable working-class Muslims (see also *nagtroep*).

minstrel (same as Cape minstrel or **coon**). A troupe member and participant of the *klopse* carnival, referencing American blackface minstrelsy.

moffie 1 Derogatory Cape slang for gay male, or transvestite, and still used within the gay community as part of their self-identification; 2 a cross-gender carnival personality dressed as a drag queen. A plausible etymology is 'mophrodite', a variation of 'hermaphrodite' (see Pacey 2014).

moppie (or comic). 1 A comic song; 2 one of the singing **items** performed by the troupe's choir during competition (see also *singing pak*).

nagtroep (English: night troupe; plural *nagtroepe*). A **Malay Choir** that marches in the city on New Year's Eve wearing tracksuits.

Oujaarsaand (English: New Year's Eve). A night procession held by *nagtroepe* on New Year's Eve, during which members of the choir are offered *tafels* and sing traditional songs accompanied by banjos and *gummies*.

rand (symbol: R; code: ZAR). The present-day currency of South Africa, introduced in 1961 trading at R 0.70 per dollar (now ca. R 13.25).

ratiep A Cape Muslim ritual in which dancers stab and pierce themselves with sharp objects without injuries to the sounds of drums and Arabic chants (see Desai 1993). Some of the objects used include swords, daggers, hammers, and steel spikes (*alwaan*).

shebeen (from Irish *síbín*: illicit whisky). A licensed or unlicensed bar in the townships where alcoholic beverages are sold.

singing pak (English: singing pack). The troupe's choir, composed of approximately 40 singers (usually male) who perform 5 of the 17 *items* adjudicated.

soldaat [sɔl'dat] (English: soldier; plural: *soldate*). The ordinary troupe member holding the lowest position in a troupe's rank.

solo artist A musician (usually singer) hired by a troupe's committee to perform during competitions on the team's behalf.

tafel [tafəl] (English: table). A table with refreshments and snacks offered to the troupe by one or several hosts, including the troupe owner, as a way of acknowledging the contribution and hard work of its members.

tamarien (or *tamarine*). A small frame drum played with the knuckles of the hand, usually on the offbeats.

tariek (from Arabic *t'ariga*: brotherhood; Sufi Islam *t'ariga*: the way). A trance-like state and mindset associated with *ghoema* music and *ratiep* performances (see Martin 1999, pp. 40–41).

troupe owner The owner of a troupe holding the highest position in a troupe's rank, sometimes revered as the boss of the team, and in charge of bookkeeping chores.

Tweede Nuwe Jaar [twedə niwə jar] (English: second New Year). The main procession held annually on 2 January, during which troupes march from District Six moving upwards towards Bo-Kaap, dancing and playing musical instruments (see Figures 1.3 and 1.4).

voorloper (English: front walker). A drum major. Drum majors (junior and senior) are responsible for leading the entourage during processions, wearing a tall hat adorned with colourful plumes and carrying a stick with which various

tricks are performed (see Figure 1.3). They also compete as solo dancers during competition.

Voorsmakie A mock parade held annually on 16 December as a starter of the main event. Its purpose is to advertise the team and instigate troupe rivalry, focusing on the quality of the brass band and its ability to draw the crowd (see Track 3 on page 177).